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EDITOR'S NOTE





This Issue's for Ly and You, and

There's been a lot of moving in my family lately. My daughter recently rented her first apartment in the city. I just moved from a larger suburban home to a small townhouse, and my mother is downsizing from her longtime home to a 32-foot trailer so she can spend her days traveling the United States. So when I started working on this new Living Simply issue, I jumped in with both feet. After all, between us three women, we cover every target audience for this publication: the young adult looking to decorate her tiny first home as inexpensively and efficiently as possible, the empty nester who's ready to live a simpler life now that her children are grown but still enjoys the comforts of home, and the retiree who's still full of adventure but now is finding that adventure by packing her life into a traveling home that needs to use every space to the max. And this issue has something for all of us (and I'll warrant for you, too!). Learn how you can still entertain even in a small space (my daughter loves her Friendsgiving dinners so she's keen on this info). Find new ways to carve out additional space for a home office (tips I could really use), and read how to navigate the challenges of downsizing and parting with pieces you've owned for decades (something that especially hit my mother). Even if you don't fall into one of these categories and just want to figure out clever ways for more storage or unique DIY ideas for showcasing your favorite pieces, this issue is still for you. As you flip through the pages, you'll be amazed at all the creative ideas we put together with you in mind, and the room-by-room tours of power-packed homes across the country will amaze you. Finally, be sure to take a quiet moment to read the article about finding the joy in simple living. Because even in today's world, there's beauty and comfort to be found in the simple things-enjoying a home-cooked meal with your family, raising chickens in your backyard, turning off the electronics and enjoying the night sounds. It's a simple life, but it's a full one, and one to be thoroughly enjoyed. Welcome to Living Simply.



Drop me a line and tell me your favorite thing in this issue! swagner@countrysampler.com

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FINDING Discover the benefits of slowing down and determining what's important in your life. BY TRACY FREDRYCHOWSKI

oise, the sounds of daily living: traffic jams, blaring radios, mind-numbing television, social notifications, text messages, ringing phones, kids screaming, appointment reminders, and the list goes on and on.

Are you longing for a simpler life? Maybe you're looking for a way to reconnect with your family, find a way to relax and unwind from the stress of everyday life, or just enjoy a quieter lifestyle now that the kids are grown and you've retired. If we're honest, most of us would say that life is complicated, parenting is exhausting, and the thoughts of living a simple life are overwhelming. Are we asking for life to be easy or are we seeking a real sense of simple living?

It took us some time to learn how to slow down and find ways to turn our backs on the life we were accustomed to living. We had to dig deep and figure out what was important to us. It wasn't an easy task, but once we changed our mind-set to one that included finding joy in what surrounded us, the rest came easy.

We're not all the same. and our simple may look different than yours. We set out on a homesteading path that included making meals from scratch, raising livestock and purging our home of useless clutter. We learned to say no more than yes to social commitments, and we cleared our calendar of events that pulled us away from our family unit. We got our finances under control by making do, doing without and started to live on less. Even though this was the path we took, you can find the joy of simple living wherever you live. It's all about embracing a life that makes you happy by looking at the simpler side of things. Not sure where to start? Just close your

Not sure where to start? Just close your eyes and dream. Years ago, when I closed my eyes I could see lush green pastures, I smelled freshly mowed hay, and I heard the clip-clop of Amish buggies driving by my parents' home. It was my happy place. It was a simpler time where electronics and commercials didn't invade my life. It was the place I yearned to be and gave us a place to start.

If you're anything like us, we felt pulled by our reliance on modern technology and appliances. No matter how hard we tried to do without or limit ourselves, we still felt drawn to so many things that clouded our vision and added useless noise to our lives. It was time for a change.

In the beginning, we started small. We found easy, manageable ways to simplify our lives while we worked on our bigger goals.

The first thing we did was change our mind-set. We were stuck thinking that the only way we could live simply was to move to the country. However, we soon realized we could start living the life we wanted by just making small changes.

Here are a few ways to embrace the joy of a simpler way of life:

Make Your Lifestyle a Priority

What is it you dream about? Is it living in the country, being debt free or traveling around the world? What steps do you need to take to make your dreams come true? Write your



goals down and take small steps toward your dreams. Whatever inspires you, make it a priority even if it takes one step at a time. Through hard work and determination, you can accomplish your lifelong dream.

Figure out what's important and let nothing stand in your way!

Slow Down and Enjoy Every Task

A big part of living simply is slowing down, which can be a real challenge for a society that's driven by the fastest, newest and the next best thing. Whether it's cleaning out a chicken coop or making a homemade meal, enjoy the task at hand. Live in the moment, invite the kids or your spouse to join you and make a game of whatever you're trying to accomplish. Don't let your mind wander to the list of other chores waiting for you.

Instead, find ways to make work fun. Stop worrying about tomorrow and start living in the moment.

Work hard and laugh often.

Connect with Nature

There's something so natural about feeling the dirt between your fingers, the sand between your toes and the sun shining on your face. One of the first steps to living a simpler life is allowing the wonders of nature to connect with your soul. Start today by taking a break to enjoy nature and its calming effect. Dig your hands in the soil as much as you can and connect with the earth by feeding the birds, planting a garden and just standing in awe of the changing seasons. Make it a point to actually stop and smell the roses.

Connect with nature, not Wi-Fi.



* Keep the House Quiet

Often, the noise and stress we allow in our lives come from the constant stimulation of our brain. The sound of the television or the beat of the radio adds clutter to your world. Noise is the one thing you have complete control over. When you walk through your door, your home should be your refuge. A place where you can relax, calm down and have a state of complete serenity. Create a sense of peace in your environment by incorporating technology-free zones and family-only days. Help your family avoid becoming overstimulated by turning off the noise that invades your space.

Find time to just be still.

* Revel in Good Old-Fashioned Hard Work

There's nothing more satisfying than a few hours of hard work. We have it easy compared to our ancestors. Nowadays, there's usually an appliance that can complete almost any task for us. Trade those fancy gadgets in and use your hands. Wash dishes, knead bread or even rake your yard by hand. Anything you can do the old-fashioned way will connect you to a simpler time, plus it will save space in your home.

Take the time to enjoy life's simple pleasures.

* Stay Organized

Do you have days when your to-do list overwhelms you? Make a list on Monday of the things you need to do that week and then assign a day to each item. Even if your list is long, it's liberating to cross things off and see it dwindle by the end of the week. By writing your lists down it releases the anxiety you may feel over forgetting something important. Even children benefit from a well-organized environment. The skills they learn by watching you keep tasks in order will help them lead productive and stress-free lives.

Simple habits will help you tackle a hectic life.

Just Say No

It's one of the simplest words in the dictionary, but the hardest word to say. I can't stress enough how important learning to say no is. Prioritizing what's important and saying no to the rest is the only way to keep an otherwise crazy life in check. Hang up the calendar and aim to keep it empty more than striving to fill it up. Find balance with your family and look for ways to de-stress the world around you. When you have free time to yourself, you can listen to the birds, watch your children play, make a homemade meal, and have a real conversation with the people that matter the most—your family.

Leave plenty of room in your daily life to *just be you.*

Decide If It Is a Want

As noted, one of the biggest hurdles in life is learning to tell yourself no. In our consumerdriven world, we're conditioned to feel like we're entitled to anything we want, no matter the cost. In most cases, this leads to overspending on luxuries we think we can't live without. Learn to make do or do without to keep consumerism away from your front door.

The greatest step toward finding joy in simple living is learning to let go and be content with what you have.

X Take Inventory

Stop and take a good look at your life. What areas have you lost touch with? Do you struggle with allowing modern conveniences to monopolize your life? Is your calendar so full that you feel like you're spiraling out of control? Maybe it's your work schedule or spending habits that stress you out. Whatever it is, use some of the tips above to create a plan to slow down and prioritize your life. If you learn some ways to simplify your life, it will help you create a climate of peace for those times when life is anything but simple.

Invest time in your family, not money.

Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, stop right now and dream your dream. Figure out what type of lifestyle you want to live with your family. Slow down and concentrate on each task at hand. Decide what's most important in your life. Take a break as often as you can to enjoy nature. Make the most of every single day. Simple living is only a few steps away-start by taking the first step today.

PHOTOGRAPHY ON PAGES 4-7 FROM SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. PAGES 4-5, RAFAL OLKIS. PAGE 6, MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES.

Tracy Fredrychowski lives a simple life in a modern world on her South Carolina farm. Writing for the popular blog, Our Simple Homestead, she strives to preserve the art of homemaking and homesteading while encouraging her readers to slow down and live a quiet, stress-free life. Focusing on Amish fiction, she also inspires her readers to live a simple life through faith, family and community. Visit her at www.oursimplehomestead.com.









Steps to DOWNSIZING

Reducing a lifetime of furnishings, household goods and mementos can be a daunting task, but follow these steps to put yourself in a better place.

BY SUSAN WAGNER

hether you're moving to a smaller home now that the kids are grown, opting for a single-story house to eliminate stairs, finally following your dream to that apartment in the city or simply moving to a smaller space for maintenance or financial reasons, downsizing from a larger home to a smaller one can take a toll. "It's a very difficult task," notes writer Susan Patterson in "8 Steps To Downsizing And Getting Your Life Back" at Off The Grid News (www.offthegridnews.com). "It may seem impossible to weed out what you don't need, and often emotions get in the way."

In some cases, your furnishings or other possessions just won't fit into a smaller home, so you need to

condense down the best items for the future space. But in other cases, as Patterson noted, it's more than that. Maybe you've spent many years in a larger home and have collected a lot of items during that time. Maybe it didn't seem like a big deal to stash extra clothes in the back of the closet, or to keep old holiday decorations that you didn't use anymore packed away in the attic because you had the available space. But now, in a smaller home, space will be a critical commodity, so every item must serve a purpose and every inch of space must be utilized to its best ability.

Downsizing takes a strong mental attitude and a good plan. Follow these seven steps to make it go as smoothly as possible.

1. Choose a Date and Set a Timetable

It sort of goes without saying, but you'll first want to decide on a date or month for when you'll be moving. Having an end date will help you plan better and set a time line for taking action on the various downsizing steps.

Inevitably, it will take longer than you anticipate to sort through everything, find venues for your unwanted pieces and condense everything down to what will go to your new home. If you're selling or buying a new place, then a date will be set for you. But even if you don't have a set-in-stone date, it's best to have an end date in mind; otherwise, you'll be tempted to put things off and not work efficiently toward your goal.

Plan on starting the process about three to four months out, longer if you have a large home that has never really been gone through or if you are a bit of a pack rat. Divide your home into sections and choose which areas to tackle first. You may want to start with the attic, guest bedroom, crafting/sewing room or other seldom-used space. This way, you're not yet disrupting your everyday living areas, and you can use the cleaned-out space as a



staging area for your Keep or Donate piles.
Margit Novack, president of Moving
Solutions in Philadelphia (www.moving
solutions.com) and founding president of the
National Association of Senior Move
Managers (www.nasmm.org), suggests that
about two hours at a time is ideal for many
older adults. Give yourself a mini-deadline to
reach; say, the basement cleaned out by
month one, the extra closets by month two.

2. Review the Size of the New Space

If you know where you'll be moving to, get the dimensions of all the rooms in the new home. If you don't have a specific place in mind, at least estimate the square footage of the space you want. If you know you'll be moving to a home that's about a third the size of your existing home, then you'll know that you have to pare down your furnishings by about two thirds. It's better to underestimate your space than overestimate it.

In addition to the overall square footage, also get measurements for doorways, ceiling heights, cabinets, etc., as well as the shapes of the rooms and where windows and doorways are placed. You may find your armoire is too tall for your bedroom or won't fit through the doorway. Or maybe you'd like to keep the large cut-glass vase from Aunt Martha, but you realize it won't fit on any shelf or cupboard and you'd have to leave it out on the countertop or an end table all the time. If you don't want that, maybe it's time to pass the item on to another relative.

Also think about the layout of the new place. Will you have a formal dining room? If not, then taking a china cabinet might not be the best choice. However, if the piece is a family heirloom or a well-loved favorite, consider if you could use it for a new purpose, such as a storage piece in a home office or a wardrobe for seasonal clothes in a bedroom.

Get a visual idea of how the rooms in the new home look. Map the rooms out on

Where to *Qonate* or *Qispose of* Items

- * Donate clothing or household items to charities such as Goodwill, Salvation Army, Vietnam Vets or local church groups.
- * Bring items that might be worth some money to thrift or consignment shops.
- * Offer craft supplies, fabric, art supplies and school supplies to senior citizen centers or under-privileged schools.
- * Ask your local library if they'd like books for their used-book sale.
- * Donate unopened or travel-size soaps or shampoos to homeless shelters or domestic abuse centers.
- * List items on Freecycle.org or other online free exchange sites.
- * Bring building supplies or home remodeling items to a Habitat ReStore or similar home building centers.
- * Drop off electronics at community recycling centers.
- * Dispose of chemicals and paints at specially designated disposal areas.

paper, or use an online app. Then measure your furniture and see how it will fit in that room. You can do the same for cupboards and closets.

3. Consider Your Activities

Are you moving to a smaller space because of medical reasons, or are you and your spouse empty nesters? What this next stage in your life will bring will help you decide what furnishings or household items you'll need or how you'll decorate your home. Maybe you'll want specific elements in your rooms that will make living easier, or maybe you can do without certain possessions because you don't really need them anymore.

If you're moving because of medical reasons, consider keeping lightweight or easy-to-move furniture over heavier pieces. If you'll be getting a meal service in the future, you won't need as many cooking supplies.

Maybe this new era of your life means you'll be able to go out more or travel often. If so, you won't need as many household items as you might have before.

Will you still be entertaining or having friends or relatives visit? If you're no longer going to have the big Christmas dinner, why keep all the dishes? Also consider eliminating a large table for a smaller one. You can always rent a table and chairs if necessary. Consider everything in light of your new living situation. Do you really need to keep the punch bowl? If you needed one in a pinch, could you borrow one from a friend or just use a large bowl instead?

4. Make a List of Your **Absolutely Must-Haves**

Before even starting to look through closets or cupboards, create a list of items that you truly love or use every day. Be judicious; keep the list to a minimum. If you can think of the items you want right off the top of your head, chances are, these are the items that will be most useful or valuable to you. These should be pieces you absolutely cannot imagine living without, items that truly serve a valuable function nearly every day, or items that give you joy every time you look at them. Creating this list first will make it easier to put other items on the get-rid-of list.

The Emotional Aspect of Downsizing

Downsizing is physically a lot of work, but an even harder aspect of it can be the emotional end. Cleaning out a lifetime of memories can be overwhelming. How do you part with your grandmother's china or get rid of gifts given to you from relatives or special friends? This guilt can hold you back from being productive. But keep in mind that you're not giving your life away; you will still have all the memories, even if you don't have the physical object that goes with it. Plus, you will feel a much welcome relief without all those "things" bogging you down. And will your daughter-in-law really know that you got rid of that jeweled purse she gave you that doesn't really go with anything? Here are a few other tips to help you get through the process:

- * Think about how donating old books, clothes, dishes, etc., will help another person in need.
- * Take pictures of the special items; keep the photos (digitized versions) and get rid of the actual items.
- * Upcycle special items into something else. Turn your father's old wool vest into a scarf, or reset your aunt's jewelry into new pieces.
- * Put items on display where you can truly enjoy them. Frame your mother's wedding veil with a photo from her wedding day and hang it on your wall, or showcase several items in a shadow box.
- * Keep only one piece of something sentimental. Choose the best item from the collection and sell the rest.
- * Don't think of it as downsizing; think of it as right-sizing. You're preparing for the right-size home for you at this point in your life.



5. Sort Through Your Things

Here's the biggie: Go through all your possessions and decide whether to keep them or not. Keep in mind what percentage of items can fit in the new house, what you use constantly, or what truly gives you joy. Then, after taking a deep breath, dive in and start deciding what to give to others, donate, sell or trash.

Create a visual for your sorting. Label big boxes or bags with Donate, Sell, Recycle, Trash; or hang signs in an empty room or part of the garage and create piles under the signs. Or, take a tip from the old TLC show "Clean Sweep" lay down tarps or blankets labeled as above and move everything onto a tarp.

As you're working on sorting, take everything completely out of closets and cabinets and go through it. You'll be amazed how much you really have when it is all laid out in front of you, and you'll easily spot things that you don't ever use.

Watch for duplicates or multiples. Do you have three pairs of kitchen tongs? Two vacuum cleaners? Both a standing and a hand-held mixer? Do you really need enough dinner plates for eight when it's only going to be you and your spouse for most meals? Who could possibly use 10 different travel mugs? And you probably don't need that many bath towels or sheet sets either.

Be ruthless with items you haven't used in more than a year. If a full 12 months have gone by and you haven't used that particular item, that should tell you something. Even if the item is seasonal, if all four seasons have passed and you haven't pulled it out, then you probably won't miss it. Be especially tough about items you find yourself saying, "But I might use it." (This is where it helps to work with someone else.) Here's a perfect example: a bread machine—if you haven't used it in over a year, then you probably aren't going to be

Don't Fall into These *Four* Traps

1 Not Giving Yourself Enough Time

Downsizing is a lot of work. You might think you can get through it in a weekend, but you'll find that is not the case. What you thought might be simple sorting will take longer than expected. You'll discover parts missing for items, clothes that need to be tried on, and memories and emotions that will bubble up. Don't overcommit yourself or wait until the last minute. Plan on giving yourself three to four months to go through everything, and take breaks as needed.

2 Creating a Maybe Pile

As you're sorting, it will be tempting to start a pile of items you're not sure whether to keep or not. Avoid doing this because then you are not making a decision, you're just putting it off. And once you start the Maybe pile, it will just continue to grow. If you truly can't make a decision on something, put it in a temporary pile until a friend or relative can come over to help you decide.

3 Keeping Items That Need Work

Do you have a pile of clothes that you haven't worn for a while because they need some sewing? Or small furnishings that you've been meaning to paint before using them? What about appliances that need repair? Be honest with yourself. If you haven't tackled them yet, what makes you think you will now? Get rid of them rather than moving them to a new space where they will just continue to sit (and now take up even more valuable space than before).

4 Renting a Storage Unit

Whether it's because you can't make a decision on whether to keep something or not, or because you didn't give yourself enough time to sort through things, renting a storage unit is not the solution. It's just an easy out. You'll end up keeping the unit (and paying for it!) much longer than you intended. Since you'll have to make a special trip to go there, you'll be less likely to use the things you stored, and since the items are "out of sight, out of mind," you'll likely forget what's in there. The only time it makes sense to rent a storage unit is when it's part of the actual plan (see Step 7).

making bread that often. If you still have a taste for homemade bread once in a while, consider other options that won't take up space: purchase frozen bread dough that you can bake yourself, stop at a local bakery and get a loaf made fresh that day, or plan a special time to make a loaf the old-fashioned way (kneading dough is a great workout for your arms!).

Get rid of items that are past their prime—dated clothes, expired foods, old makeup (yes, it does expire), spices older than a year (they lose their potency), old medicines, and separated shampoos or cleaners. Likewise with things missing their mates, such as plastic food-storage containers without matching lids or single mittens and gloves.

Don't keep items "just in case." You can always borrow an item from a friend or rent appliances, furnishings and the like. When you keep something "just in case," you're living in a future that may or may not happen. Think about the here and now, and consider if that item is truly serving a purpose in your life right now. "You can't prepare for every scenario under the sun, so why try to hoard all the things," notes Tico & Tina in their "Exploring Minimalism" series (www.ticoandtina.com/exploring-minimalism).

6. Go with Smaller Items or a Different Format

Do whatever you can to minimize the amount of space an item takes up. Scan all your paperwork, diplomas and professional awards, and get rid of the actual copies. Scan warranties or receipts for any items still under warranty. Scan manuals, or see if the manuals are available online.

Scan family recipes and sell or donate your cookbooks; look for future recipes online. Digitize your music and movies. Send family pictures, slides or home movies out to be digitized; you can then get rid of not only the actual film but also the players and storage containers. If you're nervous about getting rid of all your old photos, find an album or box and narrow down the photos to the most important ones that can fit into the box or album.

Consider new technology that takes up less space. Do you need an alarm clock anymore or do you use your phone? What about a camcorder or inexpensive camera? Most people take videos or pictures on their phones nowadays. Do you need a wall clock since many appliances have clocks built into them?

Think about choosing smaller items to better utilize the space. Sell your oversize couch and instead go with a small sofa or love seat. Swap out a coffee table for a chest that can also provide storage, or a low bench that can act as additional seating.



Rather than keeping your television in a large entertainment center, mount it on the wall; also consider getting a smaller TV. With fewer rooms, you'll have less need for all those table or floor lamps. And if square footage is at a premium, consider wall lamps or overhead lighting instead.

The new house is also likely to have less counter space, so a knife block is no longer a practical item. Instead, plan on keeping your knives in a drawer or purchasing a magnetic knife strip. And while you're getting rid of the knife block, take a hard look at all your knives. Do you really use the whole set? Most everyday cooks can get by with a chef's knife, serrated knife and paring knife. And what

about spices? Do you need all of them or could you keep a couple of basic ones and maybe one or two good mixed versions.

Review Your Piles and Take Action on Them Right Away

With everything sorted, strike while the iron is hot and throw away everything destined for the trash immediately. The longer you keep it around, the more likely you are to start pulling things out of that pile. This should be the easiest pile to take action on, and eliminating it from your home will give you the sense of accomplishment and the urge to keep going.

Make arrangements for your donations right away as well. Check ahead of time to see what centers or organizations take what types of items and plan your Donate pile accordingly. Then, schedule a pickup time, or load up everything in your car and drop it all off in one fell swoop. See "Where to Donate or Dispose of Items" on page 10 for suggestions.

Separate your Sell pile into different sections. You'll probably have smaller inexpensive items as well as some pieces that might go for more money. Determine how you will sell these items, whether by having a garage sale, working with an estate seller, or selling them yourself online. See "Put a Little Cash in Your Pocket" on page 14 for more details on selling items.

Finally, if you truly have a few things that you're just not sure of (maybe you'd really like to have two nightstands, but you won't know if you'll be able to use both until you get into your new home), consider renting a small storage unit for a limited amount of time. Yes, this goes against our advice in "Don't Fall into These Four Traps," but remember, this is only temporary. Keep the storage unit for only three months (no more!) and at the end of that time, donate or sell anything that's still there. You'll quickly find out if something in the unit is a necessity because you must really need it if you actually make the effort to go get it.

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Paperwork: What to Keep, What to Toss

Important papers can often be one of the most confusing things to sort through. Most homeowners aren't even sure what needs to be kept, so they end up keeping boxes of extraneous paperwork or throwing away important documents. Here's a handy list of what to keep and for how long.

FOREVER: Marriage licenses, birth certificates, adoption papers, divorce decrees, death certificates, wills, military discharge papers, social security cards and records of paid mortgages should be kept forever, in paper format and in a secure location.

WHILE CURRENT: Loan documents, such as car loans and mortgages, should be kept as long as the loan is active. Likewise with stocks, bonds and other investment papers.

SEVEN YEARS: Tax returns, investment statements, tax-related receipts and anything related to taxes.

ONE YEAR: Paycheck stubs, bank statements, credit card receipts, utility bills, cancelled checks.

Note: When disposing of sensitive paperwork, be sure to shred or burn it. Many communities hold annual shredding events.

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Discover tips for choosing the best way to price, market and sell your items through various online and in-person options.

IN Gowr POCKET

BY SUSAN WAGNER

nce you've sorted through all your household goods and personal items, now comes the time to turn that Sell pile into cash. Yet, keep in mind that while it's nice to get money for your goods, the goal is ultimately to reduce your household. So look over everything with a judicial eye, and give it an honest evaluation of what you'd take for it. Certain items sell better through different venues. Separate small inexpensive pieces from larger, more expensive or rare items and decide how you will sell each group.

Various options exist for selling your household items. Traditional garage sales are great for inexpensive goods, but they can take a lot of work. Selling online might offer a bigger audience, but you'll have to deal with monitoring the ad, shipping the merchandise and watching out for scammers. Working with an auctioneer or estate sale company lets others do the work, but you need to agree to their terms. The best way to handle your Sell pile will likely be a combination of all these options.

Start first by researching your goods. Visit consignment shops or thrift stores to see what basic clothing or household items go for. Browse eBay, Craigslist or Amazon to view listings of other merchandise for sale. Search online for the value of antiques or rare goods. For most basic items, don't

expect to get much (but a few bucks is better than nothing). Even for antiques or larger items, you might not get what you hope for.

Retirement reporter Elizabeth O'Brien in her article "Why Aunt Betty's Silver Won't Pay the Bills" on MarketWatch.com, says "People attach more value to their items than most command at retail." O'Brien quotes experts who say partly to blame for this is the glut of secondhand goods available now. She also adds that television shows such as "Storage Wars" have trained people to think that there are treasures hiding in every basement, attic or storage unit.

Realistically, though, the price that you will likely get for an item isn't based on anything except what a buyer chooses to pay.

"The value of an item isn't what you paid for it or how well made or special it is, it's what someone is willing to pay for it right now," says Margit Novack, president of Moving Solutions in Philadelphia (www. movingsolutions.com) and founding president of the National Association of Senior Move Managers (www.nasmm.org).

Armed with a rough estimate of the value of your items and the timetable for how long you have to devote to selling (not to mention how much work you want to put into it), you can now plan out the selling phase of your downsizing task.



Garage Sales

The standard garage sale is great if you have a lot of inexpensive everyday objects, are willing to put in some work, and want to keep all the money for yourself. First, pick a date for the sale. For optimal selling, you'll want two days, usually Friday and Saturday. If your schedule allows, choose a day in spring or fall when it's not too hot or too cold. Start your sale early; you want to catch people before they've gotten too busy with their day. But know that no matter what hour you set, you might have early birds waiting on your doorstep.

Advertise in your local newspaper, with neighborhood signs and through online sites such as Yard Sale Search or Garage Sale Hunter. For newspaper and online ads, list your bigger-ticket items first and specify anything you want to sell quickly.

When making signs for the neighborhood, use fluorescent paper and large lettering. Be sure to check with local regulations on the positioning of signs as well as if you need a permit to hold the sale.

Consider

Spend the weeks leading up to the sale cleaning **bundling pieces** and pricing. Divide items into groups to together. Sell make it easier for several throw people to shop: men's pillows and blankets clothes, women's together as living clothes, kids' clothes, room decor. toys, dishes, books, collectibles, etc. Price everything individually and plan on having table or display space for every item. People don't like to dig through boxes to find merchandise.

A few days before the sale, be sure to get enough cash to make change. Keep your money in a secure spot, either in a closed box that is always being watched by someone or in a money pouch that you keep on yourself. Watch out for customers wanting to pay for small items with \$50 or \$100 bills; they may be counterfeit. Only accept \$20 bills or do a little research on identifying counterfeit money.

Plan deep discounts for your second day. Remember, your goal is to move as much as possible and not pack it back up. Immediately donate or consign any remaining items.

Local Social Media Sites

One of the newest ways to sell is on local Facebook groups or pages specifically devoted to selling used merchandise. Search for your city or county name and "garage sale" in the Facebook search box to find a site to join. When choosing a site, check to see how active it is. Look at the number of people in the group, the most recent posts and the number of comments. See if it is a selling page or a group page. With groups, you just share a picture and post about the item. Selling pages actually have templates to make it easier to post items for sale. Once you decide on a site, check out the rules and determine when the site is most active. Some groups have a minimum selling price, such as \$25. One way to get around this (and get rid of more items) is to bundle pieces together. For instance, sell several throw pillows and blankets together as living room decor, or combine holiday decorations together into one grouping.

> Make sure the pictures you post are clear and show the item from different angles.

Specify in your description the item, condition, make, model, price and what type of payment you'll accept (generally go with cash only). Never give your home address or phone number in the ad; instead, use Facebook's private posts or messaging functions.

One word of caution: Most sites are fairly active and posts can get lots of replies almost instantly. Be sure to post only when you can respond back fairly quickly. Also, remember that online sites generate responses from all sorts of individuals. Don't be surprised at some potentially negative interactions; deal with them professionally and don't escalate any drama.

Estate Sales and Auctions

For household items that are of a higher value than traditional garage-sale goods, or if you have a large amount of furnishings, tools or collections, consider having an on-site estate

sale or auction. Look online or in your local Yellow Pages for professionals and find one you're comfortable with. The company will send a crew to go through the entire house or property, marking and pricing items and organizing and displaying them. Before that, it is up to you to remove, lock up or mark Not For Sale on anything you do not want sold. Most estate sale agents won't accept a sale unless there is a minimum amount of sales that can be made, so this option is best for when you have lots of merchandise and more valuable pieces. However, expect a professional estate sale manager to take between 25 and 35 percent of the proceeds, and there may be a minimum no matter what the ultimate profit is. The agent may also charge an additional fee to dispose of anything that doesn't sell. Nevertheless, estate sales usually generate more motivated buyers than garage sales. One thing to keep in mind: Unlike garage sales, plan on being away during the days of the sale. It can be heart-wrenching to hear people talk so cavalierly about your treasures.

Antiques Dealers and Professional Appraisers/Resellers

If you have certain items that you know are fairly valuable, it's best to sell those items singularly. Both garage-sale and estate-sale buyers expect to get items for cheap, so you'll likely get more profit by selling valuable items to professional sellers.

Consider hiring an appraiser to help determine the worth of your more treasured pieces. Expect to pay \$125-\$150 per hour for a "walk-through," during which the appraiser examines every relevant item in your house, says Harry L. Rinker, author of Sell, Keep, or Toss? How to Downsize a Home, Settle an Estate, and Appraise Personal Property. Appraisers are often familiar with various industries and connected with other sellers, so they usually recommend specialists for very rare items.

You can also have someone do an appraisal online or you can bring the item to their office. For online appraisals, you usually upload photos and scanned documents showing the sales receipt, tracing provenance or any other relevant details. With in-person appraisals, be



Check This Out: Police departments are making transactions safer by offering internet-purchase safe zones where buyers and sellers can meet. Locations in police station lobbies and parking areas are usually marked with signage and often offer 24-hour video surveillance. Search for one near you at www.safedeal.zone.



sure to have that paperwork ready. Individual appraisals are charged a per-item fee. After the evaluation, you should receive a written appraisal that includes photo documentation. At this point, you can consider selling the piece with the appraiser or not.

Craigslist

If you're looking for local buyers and you're fairly computer savvy, Craigslist might be a good option for you. With this site, you don't have to worry about shipping an item or estimating shipping costs. You negotiate with the buyer on when and where they'll pick up the item. Since the listings are local, though, your audience is not as big as sites like eBay or Amazon. Craigslist is best for large items such as furniture or appliances, although smaller items can be sold as well. When taking photos, make sure the pictures have minimal background and use natural lighting. Also, if items are unusually big or small, place them next to another object to show relative size.

When writing your description, be sure to carefully review it for accuracy and spelling errors, and avoid using all capitals, excessive punctuation and superlative adjectives, as this type of writing tends to be used by scammers. Don't list your price too low; make it the same or close to what other items are selling for. Most people want to negotiate, and if the offer is too low or too good to be true, people

might think it is and not contact you. Keep your descriptions short, usually a paragraph and not much more.

When making the transaction, try to meet in a public place; bring a friend with you and only accept cash. Granted, this might be hard for furniture or other large items. In that case, be sure you feel comfortable with the buyer before giving out your address. Meet the buyer outside (again, make sure there is someone else home with you), and choose a time during daylight hours when there are likely to be other people around.

With Craigslist, you'll need to be patient. Check your email often, and if the item sells, update the listing right away to indicate that. If the item doesn't sell, list it again a few weeks later. Craigslist also has a free section and a barter section.

eBay works a lot like Craigslist, but you'll need to set up a seller's account and probably a PayPal account as well to accept payments. eBay also takes fees from the final sale, and you'll have to package and ship the item to the buyer. If your item is valuable, this might be the better option, as an eBay listing will reach more people than Craigslist. As with other online listings, be sure to post several clear photos and give detailed information. Watch out for scammers who say they want to buy

your item but need you to send your account information or wire money first. Hints of a scammer include referring to items generically rather than with specific names, and offering you more money than you're asking for.

Amazon Marketplace

Another online option that's great for selling electronics, books, toys, games and some household items is Amazon Marketplace. You simply type in the ISBN for books or make and model for other items, and the site will pull up matching listings. There is then a button you can click that says "Sell on Amazon." After you create an account, it will walk you through setting up your listing. One nice aspect of this site is that it will connect your item to new ones being sold, so when someone searches for that item, they also see the option of buying it used from you. You have the option of paying a monthly fee to sell as much as you want on the site, or you can pay a single-item fee for each piece you sell, plus service fees. You will be notified when someone purchases your item, and then you can let Amazon do the shipping or you can handle it yourself. Amazon deposits payments into your bank account at regular intervals.

PHOTOGRAPHY ON PAGES 14-17 FROM SHUTTERSTOCK. COM. PAGE 14, FROM TOP: WICHAN KONGCHAN, GOLDEN BROWN. PAGE 15, MILA SUPINSKAYA GLASHCHENKO. PAGE 17, NATASHILO.



Use these smart ideas to help you make the most of your smaller home. etite ABODE

aybe you're in your first tiny little apartment (hooray, you). Or maybe you've just downsized to a small bungalow after the kids moved out (hugs, empty-nestermomma). Maybe you live in a downtown loft, or a tiny cottage at the beach (lucky duck). No matter what your reason, a small space is where you call home.

My family and I have lived in many small spaces over the years, too, and in each case, our little home was the perfect place for us for that season of our life.

Even if you desire a home that is bigger but the timing isn't quite right, you can make the most of the place you have now with just a few easy fixes.

Declutter and Keep Only What You Love

In a small home, there is simply no room for vast collections. But you can still have what really matters to you if you edit well; you will just have to eliminate some items. You can't keep all the things. (Even in a larger house, editing well is the sign of a good design.)

BRIGHTEN UP

This tiny kitchen makes use of bright colors to add vim to the room. The skylight brings in light, and pans get a special storage spot along one of the beams.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GRIDLEY + GRAVES.

This is truly the easiest way to make a small space work. Freeing yourself of all the excess things that need dusting and maintaining should be the very first step you take when transitioning to a smaller space. (For more tips on this, see "7 Steps to Downsizing" on page 9.)

Rotate Your Decor

Maybe you love to decorate seasonally. Or maybe you shouldn't part with the pieces that have been passed down to you from your family. Or maybe you plan to move to a larger space at some point and want to keep decor for that. Regardless, sometimes you may have more decor than you can have out on display all at once.

A good way to deal with this dilemma, and keep your space from becoming overwhelmed with tchotchkes and other decorations, is to keep some things in storage and rotate your favorite pieces through your space when the mood strikes.

Rotating decorative items can also be a lot of fun because you can save money by "shopping the house" or your private stash.

Use Dual- or Multi-Purpose Furniture

Dual-purpose furniture is a brilliant way to make the most of the limited square footage in small homes.

For example, you can choose ottomans and coffee tables that also house things like



SMALL KITCHENS CAN STILL BE FUNCTIONAL

In Shannon Acheson's previous home, stools tucked under a short counter provided seating when needed, and open shelving provided a home for glassware without filling the space with heavy cabinets.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SHANNON ACHESON OF AKADESIGN.CA.

HANG 'EM HIGH

Use a designer's trick and hang your curtain higher up on the wall than just at the top of your windows. It will fool your eye into thinking the ceiling is higher than it is.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBIN STUBBERT.



blankets or out-of-season clothes. Or if you don't have a guest room and sometimes entertain overnight visitors, choose a sofa bed or pull-out couch to place in your living room or home office. Keep folding tray tables tucked into a corner for extra eating or game-playing surfaces during a party.

And no, you don't have to buy the standard everyone-else-has-it stuff from the nearest big-box store! Think outside the box, so to speak. Repurpose an antique chest as a coffee table. Or use a beautiful heirloom dresser as a media cabinet. Be creative with your pieces. For more clever dual-purpose items, see "Flexible Furnishings" on page 92.

Use Every Square Inch of Available Storage Space

Because you've kept only what you love, your home shouldn't be overrun with stuff. But you do need to make sure everything you keep has a place ... and then you need to be sure you put things where they belong when you're finished with them.

You may want to get creative with your storage, too:

- Add another rod to your closet to store more clothes as well as off-season jackets and coats
- ☼ Install additional shelves in your pantry to hold more items out of sight.

- Add slide-out drawers to cupboards to better organize your pots and pans.
- Put pantry storage out in the open on shelving. Use pretty containers for an extra dash of style.

Once you have a place for everything, staying organized is easy. Check out additional storage ideas on page 84.

Create the Illusion of More Space

Let's face it, sometimes even though you love your small space, you just want it to appear larger than it is. That's when you can employ a few designer tricks to fool your eyes into feeling like they're seeing bigger.

For example, you can absolutely use a bright or bold color to add drama in a small space, but if you want the space to look bigger, neutrals are the way to go. That doesn't have to mean boring, though, if you remember to use different shades of your neutral color and add plenty of texture.

Try removing any useless doors in the main living spaces for more flow. If you live in an older home, this may be especially necessary. If the door doesn't need to be there for privacy, remove it and store it to create a more open feel.

You can also hang your curtains high and wide to help your windows and therefore

STAY COMFORTABLE

It's still possible to fit comfortable furniture in small rooms. Don't be afraid to put couches in front of windows or tables in front of a fireplace or bookshelf. Rachel Pereira of Shades of Blue Interiors added extra seating by fashioning a bench seat against the slat wall under the mounted TV.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY RACHEL PEREIRA OF SHADESOFBLUEINTERIORS.COM.





SMALL BUT MODERN

Bathrooms in smaller homes need to use space wisely. Here, a glass wall separates the walk-in shower from the toilet, effectively doubling the space.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BLACKSTONEEDGE.COM.

the rest of your space to feel larger. Or you can hang a large mirror-or a wall of mirrors—that reflect the light, also making the space seem bigger.

Illuminate Well

Small spaces can sometimes feel even smaller—and cramped and dark—because they're not well lit. But it doesn't have to be that way.

There are three types of lighting: ambient (general), task and accent. You definitely need the first two in all spaces. General lighting provides an overall illumination and typically comes from ceiling lights (chandeliers, pot lights, track lights, etc.). Task lighting provides exactly what it says it does, lighting to perform tasks. This typically comes from reading lamps, under-cabinet lighting, etc. And accent lights are typically used to light pretty things such as paintings or sculptures.

If your overhead lighting isn't sufficient, try changing the bulbs to brighter ones or swapping out the fixture entirely. You can also add task lighting to your space with table lamps, floor lamps or, in extra-small spaces, wall sconces.



EXTEND THE KITCHEN SPACE

Architect Lauren Rubin designed the space around the doorway in this art-deco New York apartment to extend the storage space of the kitchen. White dishes matching the white shelves keep the space from looking cluttered and overwhelming.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY LAUREN RUBIN ARCHITECTURE.

Rearrange the Furniture and **Pay Attention to Scale**

Sometimes maximizing your small home is simply a matter of making better use of the actual square footage. It's amazing what a well-arranged room can do for the functional and perceived space in a home.

This doesn't have to be a complicated process filled with drawing after drawing of floor plans (unless you like that sort of thing). Just put some felt sliders on the feet of your furniture and move the pieces around until you find a layout that works for you and the room.

One other word on furniture is to be careful of scale. You can go big with one or two items in a small room—which I love to do and can make a small space look larger and more elegant—but when you're living in a small space, you cannot go to the store and buy a matchy-matchy set of oversize pieces (for example, a couch, love seat and chair). This type of overuse of larger-scale pieces will simply overwhelm your room.

You may even find that you must forgo a sofa altogether and go with a love seat or settee instead, depending on the actual size limits of your small space.

No matter how small your home is, or why you're living there, you can make the most of it with a little ingenuity and creative thinking. So, take a fresh look around and go love your small space in a new way!



Shannon Acheson is a mostly self-taught designer, writer and stylist. Although she has completed her interior design diploma, she'd much rather teach you how to decorate your own home than do it for you—if you teach someone to fish, and all that. She is the writer and one half of the creative duo behind the DIY and design site, AKA Design (www.akadesign.ca). Shannon resides in the suburbs of Toronto, Ontario, with her husband, Dean, and their three homeschooled kids.









DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARTI AJAX OF MARTIAJAX.COM

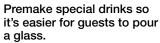


f you live in a small space, you may be hesitant to throw a party. Don't be! Sharing a meal with friends, coworkers, neighbors and family can be done effectively even when short on square footage. Let's explore some top tips and tricks for entertaining that allow you to go big in a small space!

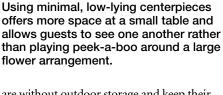
Tip 1: Declutter Your Space

To create more space for entertaining, be sure to declutter and simplify the space where you plan to entertain. Remove pieces of furniture that won't be used and stash away unnecessary accessories in your bedroom or office. Moving plants, end tables and extra kitchen appliances will free up countertop and floor space for your entertaining needs. If you have items that simply must stay in the room, but are potential eyesores, try working with the items instead of against them. For example, many urban dwellers









are without outdoor storage and keep their bicycle in the entryway. If you don't have a balcony to stash your bike, try dressing it up for the occasion. Keep a sense of humor and be realistic about what items you are able to shift around and get creative with the items that need to stay put.

Tip 2: Move Furniture Around

"My biggest tip for anyone living in a small space who likes to entertain is to make sure every piece in your home serves double duty," says Lindsay Eidahl, decorating and party planning expert at MyCreativeDays.com. "Ottomans can serve as extra seating, side tables can be turned into bars and a dining table without chairs can act as a buffet." Think outside the box to make your furniture work for you, and don't be afraid to rearrange your furniture to suit your needs. Pull your table up to your couch. Move furniture up against the wall to create more flow-through room for your guests. Swap out armchairs for folding chairs in order to fit more people around a table. Place a sofa in the kitchen for guests who want to keep you company or just hang out. Use your ottomans, garden stools or even your patio bistro set for additional seating options.





To keep things flowing smoothly, create separate areas for foods and beverages rather than having a collective food and drink table.





Tip 3: Get Creative with Food and Beverage Stations

Before setting out your food and drinks, visualize in your mind's eye how guests will flow through the space, starting with grabbing a plate and ending with pouring a drink. Take notice of any potential areas for congestion and rearrange your setup accordingly. To keep things flowing smoothly, create separate areas for foods and beverages rather than having a collective food and drink table.

No flat surface is off limits when entertaining! Get creative with repurposing every bit of available surface area for serving your food and beverages. For example, fill one side of a double-basin kitchen sink with ice and bottled drinks to eliminate the need for a separate beverage station. A large windowsill with a few bottles of wine and sparkling water becomes an instant drink area. Or perhaps use a cleared-off bookshelf, hutch, entertainment center or even the top of a fireplace mantel in a pinch. To create a chic and informal dining area, serve appetizers straight from the coffee table, and task toss pillows and poufs as extra seating.

Having guests help themselves directly from the stovetop and kitchen countertop is also a good idea! That's what Kim Montenero, creative author of ExquisitelyUnremarkable.com, recommends: "I live in a very small 1920s beach cottage and often host a brood of over 30 people. Food is prepared, served and eaten in the kitchen. I don't have a separate area to serve food and store dishware, so every course becomes part of the party decor.

Over the years, I have collected pretty serving pieces that look great on the kitchen counter when I'm not entertaining and even better filled with appetizers, main courses or desserts when I am!"

Tip 4: Make Use of Vertical Space

Tiered trays and cake stands work wonders for maximizing available counter space. Stacking your food, condiments and utensils vertically is not only beautiful but also makes everything easily accessible for your guests. At your next gathering, try using a tiered tray as a coffee bar organizer. Arrange your coffee pods, sugar, creamer, stir sticks, toppings and mugs on the tray to keep necessities accessible and contained. You can also use a few tiered trays on the food table to hold any finger foods, such as appetizers and individually portioned desserts.

If purchasing tiered trays isn't in the budget, consider making your own: "To make a quick, easy and affordable tiered tray, stack a dinner plate, salad plate and saucer plate with canning jelly jars. Secure the jars to the plates temporarily with hot glue. For additional party pizazz, fill the jars with citrus fruit slices, water tinted with food coloring, or seasonal decor," suggests Kim Wilson, lifestyle blogger at SandandSisal.com.

Tip 5: Keep Party Decor Simple

Don't clutter precious countertop space with decorations. Instead, use hanging decor such as twinkle lights, pennant banners or lanterns Think outside the box to make your furniture work for you, and don't be afraid to rearrange your furniture to suit vour needs. like pulling your table up to your couch.





Use a few tiered trays on the food table to hold any finger foods, such as appetizers and individually portioned desserts.

to create a festive mood. Flower arrangements should be kept small and manageable. "Using minimal, low-lying centerpieces offers more space at a small table and allows guests to see one another rather than playing peek-a-boo around a large flower arrangement," says Julie Blanner, lifestyle and entertaining expert at JulieBlanner.com.

Food and beverage servers can be the star of the show when entertaining and when not in use. "When countertop space is a precious commodity, use everyday items in your decor and when entertaining," says Jennifer Rizzo, creator and author of decorating lifestyle site JenniferRizzo.com. "A group of cutting boards leaned against the backsplash, pretty stacked coffee mugs and even potted herbs on a fancy cake plate near a window add simple, useful decor without adding clutter."

Beth Hunter is the author of Home Stories A to Z, a lifestyle blog featuring decorating tips, DIY tutorials, home decor projects and easy recipes

(www.homestoriesatoz.com).

PHOTOGRAPHY ON PAGES 26–27 FROM SHUTTERSTOCK. COM. PAGE 26, FROM TOP: WWW.RAWPIXEL.COM, PABLO ROGAT, WWW.RAWPIXEL.COM. PAGE 27, FROM TOP: G-STOCK STUDIO, NATALIA KIRICHENKO.

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Tiny Garden,

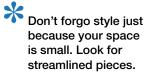
Most flowers, herbs and vegetables can be grown in containers.

BY KATHY WOODARD

Put these 10 tricks to use and start loving your tiny outdoor space.

> aving a small yard or garden doesn't mean you can't have a space that you fully enjoy. There are lots of tips and secrets from the pros that you can use to make your outdoor space a relaxing refuge from the world, no matter how tiny or unusable it may seem.

Create space-saving vertical gardens with wood pallets.











Embrace the Size of Your Space

This may seem counterintuitive, as your first instinct may be to try to make your outdoor area seem as large as possible. However, modest spaces give us something special that you can't get in a large garden, and that's intimacy. If you can't have acres of luxury, wouldn't an intimate, secluded backyard reminiscent of a courtyard in Paris or a rooftop in Barcelona be your second choice? So celebrate your tiny garden space, and highlight its positive aspects. Budget, maintenance and design decisions are all easier in a small space, so don't knock it! Work with what you have.

Decide What You Want to Do in Your Yard, and Prioritize

Is it important to dine outdoors? Want to have breathtaking blooms, or grow your own herbs and vegetables? Prefer to read books, or maybe entertain family and friends? Make sure you are designing your outdoor space to suit your wants and needs and not just to look like the pictures from a magazine.

Design Your Small Yard as an Outdoor Room

Make your outdoor area an extension of your interior home. This will make it the perfect addition to your entertaining space. Bring the indoors out! Expand your color and style schemes from indoors into your cramped outdoor zones. Your entire property will seem more cohesive and spacious, as if the outdoors are simply a continuation of your home.

Create Walls and Floors, and then Accessorize

Adding privacy is key in a small space. Use a trellis, hanging planters and screens as "walls" to make the garden feel secluded and to discourage prying eyes. Paint faux tiles onto a concrete slab patio floor, or add pavers or decking. Add throws and pillows to your patio furniture. Make sure to create a main focal

point. A pretty dining area, a trellis with a gorgeous bloomer or a piece of garden art will all create that strong sense of style. Having just one main focal point prevents a cluttered look in a small space.

5 Multi-Task Your Spaces and Your Outdoor Furniture

You may not have the room to have separate areas for everything you wish to use your yard for. If that's the case (and if you are like most of us, it is!) you need to look at double-duty furniture. Fire pits that double as coffee tables, built-in murphy bars or serving surfaces that fold up when not in use, and benches that also offer storage are just a few ways to make the most of your space. Also, consider using herbs and edibles as ornamental plantings, as there are many varieties pretty enough to do both. Lastly, remember you can eat, play board games and read in the same spot you pot plants and do crafts. Be prepared with an outdoor "kit," complete with drop cloths, unbreakable dishes and cups, and pretty cushions so that you can do a quick change as the demands on your garden change.

Enjoy Plants in the **Small Space You Have**

After all, this is one of the main reasons we crave the outdoors, right? Living greenery is a healing element, and even if your yard is the size of a postage stamp, you can have plants! Garden in containers where there is not enough soil, and think plants over lawn for a lush look in an undersize yard. Use your vertical and awkward spaces to create gardens. Plant climbers over fences to add privacy, espalier fruit trees against a blank wall, and create vertical garden planters to grow edibles and cut flowers. You can even plant your furniture by using pieces specifically made to grow plants in the center of a table, or built-in planters in the end of a bench.

> Hang painted cans on your fence to create a wall of flowers. Be sure to water regularly.



Even if the space is tiny, consider adding different levels for landscaped "rooms."



DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CIERA HOLZENTHAL OF CIERADESIGN.COM.



Lighting is Key, Even if You Only Use Your Space During the Day

Viewing a well-lit yard from indoors at night will add to your home design and actually make your interior look larger. Highlight focal points and specialty plants with spotlights, and add pretty string lights for a café vibe in your space. Lighting adds a luxe look to a garden for very little effort. Don't forget the time-honored tradition of lighted candles for a romantic glow for those evenings outdoors.

Add Water or Fire (or Both!) and Fragrant Plants, Lots of Fragrant Plants

It's an especially effective strategy to appeal to the senses in a small garden because of a garden visitor's close proximity to the elements. Water features can also mask sounds coming from other nearby yards, roads or sidewalks. Nothing makes a garden more magical than a crackling flame. Fire pits can be fueled with either wood or gas, and can be simple and rustic, or quite modern. If you can't find the space, consider a tabletop version.

Remember the Basic Principles of Design for **Small Spaces**

Use interior guidelines for color, scale and contrast for small outdoor rooms in the same way you would indoor spaces. Character counts more in a small area because you see everything close up. Place dining sets or



flooring pavers on the diagonal to fool the eye into seeing a more spacious setting. Paint perimeter walls dark to allow the borders of the yard to "disappear." This is especially effective at night, as the dark borders add mystery to the garden.

Make It a Point to Enjoy It

Really, truly love your space. Take advantage of the opportunity to appreciate and have gratitude for what you do have, instead of longing for what you don't. Isn't that what living simply is all about? Small gardens can be special, too!

Create meandering pathways to make the space seem bigger.

Kathy Woodard is a DIY home & Glove (www.thegardenglove. com). Come visit her and her fiancé, Steve, for projects, ideas and inspiration for creative

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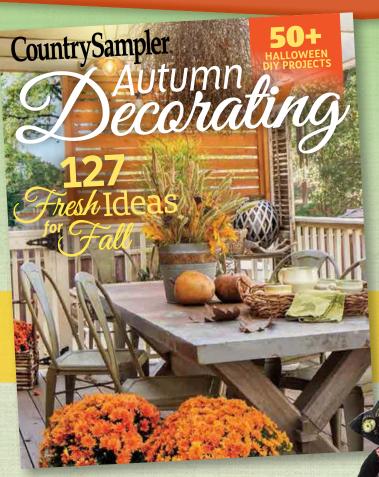
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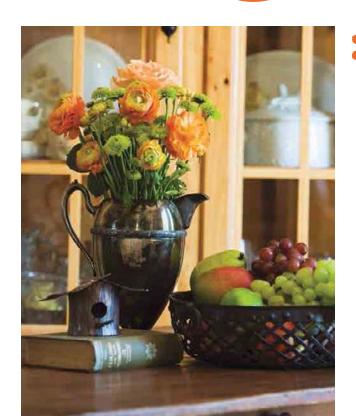








Small Homes. Style



Discover five homes that maintain a small footprint but are nowhere near short on style. Visit a charming little **Arkansas home** that's only 500 square feet, read how one couple downsized to a transformed trailer, enjoy the pleasures of Hut #1 on a Georgia lake, see how childhood sweethearts turned a tiny farmhouse into a home of their own, and marvel at how color and storage combine to create a fantastic little home.



Space-stretching strategies, reclaimed materials and thoughtful design choices amplify utility and charm in a little cottage built to house one, then two, in a historic Little Rock neighborhood.

yndsey Pardue knows how to make inches count and small spaces look great and work hard. When building her 500-square-foot house situated in Little Rock's historic Hillcrest neighborhood—the homeowner, who was single at the time, customized every nook, cranny and closet to suit her needs. She did such a fine space-stretching job that when her new husband, Tom Pardue, moved in, there was plenty of room for him and his stuff.

"It was important to use all the space," Lyndsey says. "This meant custom storage everywhere. I even measured my clothes and shoes to see how much closet space I'd need! I also wanted the home to match the cottage, Craftsman style of the neighborhood. My goal was to decorate with things that had meaning to me, for the space to feel lived in and comfortable."

Thoughtfully arranged cabinets, a cleverly configured master bedroom, a wraparound banquette, and even the master bedstead supply close-at-hand storage for all sorts of goods. Oiled pine floors, board-clad ceilings, salvaged granite counters, and assorted reclaimed elements, such as the front door, stained-glass windows, and door knobs, give the new house beenaround-awhile appeal.

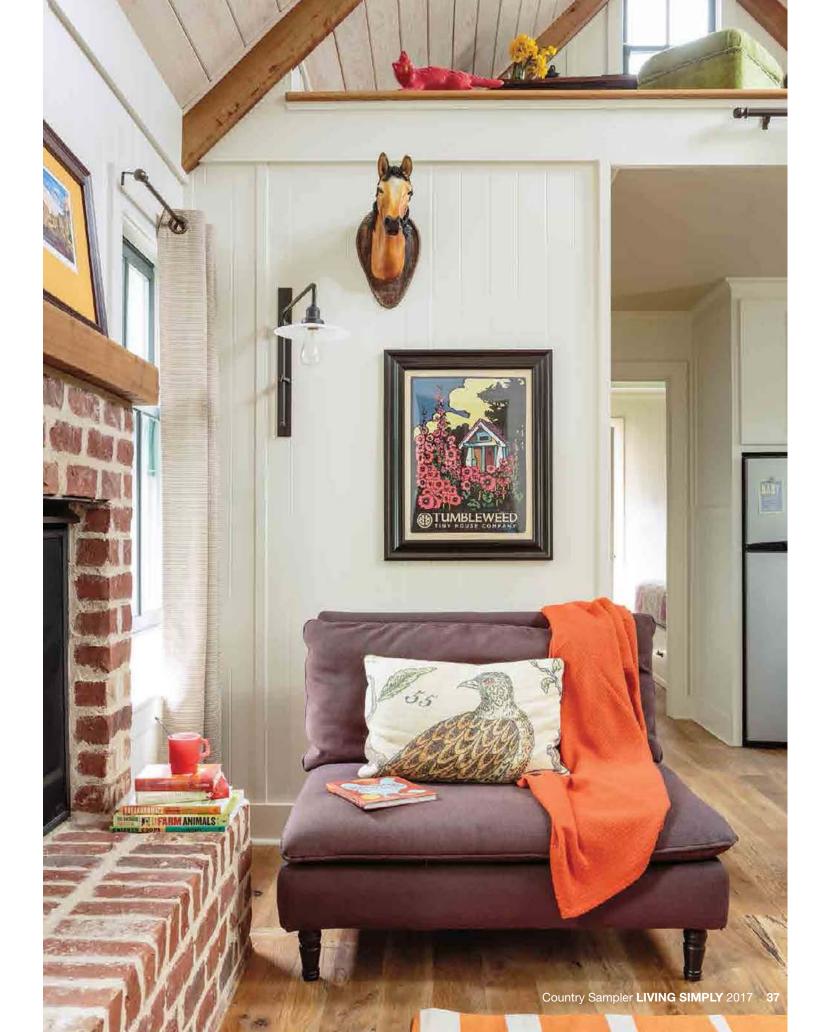
"I love that every area is full of details that make the house beautiful and functional," Lyndsey says. "There isn't any 'dead space' ... it was all designed with my lifestyle and storage needs in mind." Lyndsey and Tom have recently moved to the country to enjoy more privacy on a larger lot and perhaps raise goats, yet Lyndsey admits she loves her small Little Rock home so much that she's planning on moving back there someday!

ABOVE LEFT: The

500-square-foot Craftsmancued cottage accommodates a great room complete with kitchen and living and dining areas, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a storage loft. Lyndsey Pardue loves the front room; south- and eastfacing windows frame views of the front gardens and side yard and bring in loads of natural light, which causes interiors to appear larger than their diminutive dimensions.

OPPOSITE: Perfectly proportioned to suit the scale of the home, a contemporary love seat provides a cozv perch next to the brick fireplace; the hearth acts as a bench when extra seats are required. Neutral backdrops and spare arrangements of prettily profiled furnishings, fetching fixtures and fabrics, and arresting artworks allow each piece's personality to be appreciated.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK LOHMAN. * STYLED BY SUNDAY HENDRICKSON. WRITTEN BY ANN WILSON.





BELOW: By customizing her new home's layout, Lyndsey carved out square footage in the first-floor bedroom for a bright and breezy reading nook. She furnished it with simply lined, but vividly hued, furnishings that make a cheerful sitawhile statement.



ABOVE: Lyndsey splurged on building a freestanding single-car garage at the back of her property; she gained tons of extra storage and an anchor for a backyard patio. "The patio was a great place to have an evening cocktail and watch the chickens: Virginia, Mary Jean, and Brunella," Lyndsey says.

RIGHT: "The city is a great place to have backyard chickens," says Lyndsey, pointing to motifs and references that reflect her poultry-raising endeavors. "Just a little space and effort are needed to care for 'yard birds.'"



OPPOSITE: Tucked under the loft is the home's cooking area. "The kitchen is small, but mighty," Lyndsey says. "The cart adds extra prep space and storage, and the downsized appliances make the space ultra-efficient." Above, the loft is furnished with a low-lying shipmate's bed to provide extra sleeping space. A skylight and window keep the loft light and airy.





BELOW: Storing kitchen implements on a wall-mounted rack keeps drawers open for other gadgets and flatware; positioned behind the range, this rack holds cooking tools, spices, and hot pads exactly where they're needed.





* Keep organized with labeled drawer pulls.



OPPOSITE: Open shelves expand kitchen storage, but also fashion an easy-on-the-eye transition between living and work spaces. "Those shelves allowed me to create interest by displaying my favorite colorful serving pieces," says Lyndsey, who employs a sunshine-yellow step stool to extend her reach.



LEFT: Kitchen gear is cataloged with library-type drawer pulls equipped with labels. Lyndsey says the hardware keeps her work space organized for modern cooking tasks while adding vintage charm.

ABOVE: Lyndsey showcases her favorite and most vivacious kitchen trappings in neat stacks atop open shelves. She groups like-minded objects to ensure shelves never look cluttered.



RIGHT: Well out of traffic's way, niches in the banquette's base stow covered baskets that corral table linens and seldomused baking ware.

BELOW: A door opens to an up-high loft that stores out-of-season clothes, sports equipment, and other hobby items.



OPPOSITE: Banquette benches accommodate storage niches below and kicky patterned pillows and cushions up top. The dining table is on wheels so it can be moved as needed. The ladder operates for both the sleeping loft and the storage loft; it is simply lifted off one track and carried to the other as required.



It was important to use all the space. This meant custom storage every-where. I even measured my clothes and shoes to see how much closet space I'd need!"





LEFT: Drawers in the platform bed in the master bedroom provide storage for blankets and linens. Using wall-mounted reading lights means that nightstand tops remain open for books and electronics.

BELOW: Located on the west wall of the master bedroom, custom-size cubbies and baskets supply plentiful storage. The streamlined built-ins offer a hard-working alternative to bulkier bedroom dressers, armoires, and chests that take up more than their fair share of floor space.

"There isn't any 'dead space'
... it was all designed with
my lifestyle and storage
needs in mind."







ABOVE: A smallish alcove turns into a laundry room thanks to a space-saving stacked washer and dryer. Lyndsey hides her compact appliances behind a curtain stitched from a global-influenced fabric that hangs from a dowel rod.

6 Smart Space-**Stretching Ideas**

Here's a look at how you can make small spaces live as large as possible.

- * Get rid of stuff you don't (and will probably never) use. Paring belongings down to just the essentials will make it easier to sort, stow and show-off your cherished and most useful things.
- * Look high and low for untapped potential. Push storage baskets under benches and furniture. Install high shelves to hold items that aren't used often (but keep a step stool handy!).
- * Pick dual-purpose furnishings. Opt for platform beds with drawers that double as a wardrobe or caches for bed linens. Buy storage ottomans for stowing photo albums, throws, or board games. Choose nightstands equipped with drawers or doors to keep your bedtime gear hidden but nearby.
- * Shop thoughtfully. Buy wheeled bar carts, tables, islands and chairs so you can quickly move them from one space to another as needed. Shop retailers specializing in apartment-size furnishings and appliances; the streamlined pieces are made to supply maximum utility in downsized forms.
- * Define without walls. Use the same wall and trim colors throughout to maintain the illusion of vast spaces, but treat ceilings differently to subtly demarcate borders. Lyndsey wallpapered the entry ceiling for a pop of pizzazz and painted the bedroom and bathroom ceilings sage green for added warmth.
- * Think tidy. Dress windows, bedsteads, and cushions in tailored treatments (sans ruffles, flounces, and/or fringe) that don't extend into a room's floor space. When privacy isn't an issue, draw attention to a window's silhouette by painting the frame and mullions a high-impact hue.



PARED DOWN AND Lamed

Design miracles happened when an Oregon couple combined their talents to downsize from a three-story house to a 1980s double-wide trailer in serious need of a makeover.

fter spending 17 years remodeling their three-story 1925 Oregon home, Charmaine Manley of Charmaine Manley Design and her husband, Mark, of Manley Metal Works, decided to move to central Oregon, swearing not to buy any more fixer-uppers.

That plan changed when a dated 1,350-square-foot double-wide trailer was all they could afford. "It wasn't cheap," recalls Charmaine, "but at \$50,000 less than anything else on the market, it was the only place we could buy and still have money to fix up." It also boasted 5 acres, a shop for Mark's metalwork and a view of Three Sisters Mountains.

Both fully employed, the Manleys worked evenings and weekends to gut and rebuild their smaller home in just three short months. "We thought we were moving to Alaska and needed to finish before the snows came," Charmaine jokes.

To open up the galley kitchen, they demolished an interior wall, bumped it out three feet and added a pony wall with support columns. Committed recyclers, the couple installed drywall over the paneling rather than dump it, and donated the cabinets to a Habitat ReStore and replaced them with "green" ones. Black PaperStone countertops echo Mark's metal grape branches. Solid-core bamboo flooring provides visual and physical warmth, marrying well with a Craigslist island.

Low-VOC paints bring in Charmaine's signature love for color and brighten the small spaces. A robust red—Devine Saffron—cozies up the master bedroom, where calligraphy adds whimsy above a vintage \$10 garage-sale chest. The master bath features a glamorous vanity with a vintage sink inserted into a 1930s cabinet.

With their budget running out, the couple turned to big-box stores for the guest bathroom. "The stall shower was the only out-of-the-box one that fit the space," recalls Charmaine, who chose a sink cabinet from The Home Depot and then glammed it up with a rust-colored ceiling-tin mirror and a nautical-style wall light. And folks rave about it nevertheless.

"If we ever build a new house," Charmaine says, "we could downsize further to 950 square feet and be perfectly content."

OPPOSITE: By checking Craigslist daily, Charmaine Manley scored with pieces like this handsome china cabinet at reasonable prices. "Ten of the light fixtures we installed were found at secondhand stores or purchased off Craigslist," she says.

BEFORE: The built-in cabinet was removed, while the sliding aluminum window was replaced with French doors that lead to a new back deck built by Mark.



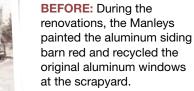






double-wide trailer in central Oregon and completely renovated its 1,350 square feet in just three short months.

AFTER: The Manleys purchased this 1980s



BELOW: "We tore out aluminum slider windows and replaced them with energy-efficient ones," Charmaine says. Rather than spend time and money removing and disposing of dated paneling, the couple installed drywall over it and then coated the walls with low-VOC (Devine) and zero-VOC (Colorhouse) paints, using colors that brighten the space.





ABOVE: By reusing their existing furnishings, the couple saved on renovation costs. A wall of gilded mirrors visually enlarges the space, and an early 1880s painted trunk doubles as a coffee table.

BENEFITS OF DOWNSIZING AND SIMPLIFYING

There are considerable benefits to be enjoyed after downsizing. Here are a few the Manleys have discovered:

- * QUICK & EASY CLEANING: One of the biggest time- and costsaving benefits is that smaller spaces are easier and faster to clean.
- * HEATING-BILL SAVINGS: Another cost-conscious benefit is lower heating bills. The Manleys kept the previous homeowners' potbelly propane fireplace centered in a living room corner.
- * COLOR THERAPY: With less wall space, it's easier to plan and play with colors. The Manleys opted for hues that lifted their spirits and made their furnishings pop.



ABOVE: The Manleys' furnishings gave an elegant look to the remodeled trailer.

RIGHT: The Manleys chose the size of this energyefficient double-hung window to fit Mark's metal artwork, originally fashioned for their previous home.

BELOW: The antique Dy-O-La cabinet near the sink, although tiny, adds panache and storage space.



fit was the only place WE COULD BUY AND STILL HAVE MONEY TO FIX UP.







BEFORE: The original galley kitchen was open on both ends, with one leading to the washer and dryer. Instead the Manleys added a wall for more cabinetry and the refrigerator and created a mud/laundry room accessible from the back entrance and inner hallway.

OPPOSITE: To keep with her environmentally friendly choices, Charmaine chose a line of "green" kitchen cabinets with a less toxic paint and finish, alternating stained wood with paint to not clash with the appliance finishes. The PaperStone counters are fabricated from 100% recycled paper and a non-petroleum resin and can withstand heat up to 350°F.



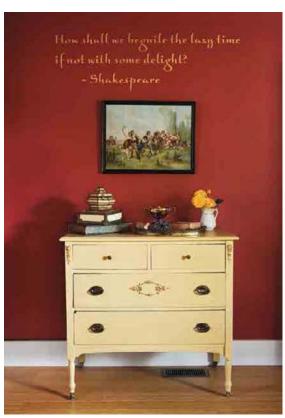
"WE COULD DOWNSIZE FURTHER TO 950 SQUARE FEET AND be perfectly content."



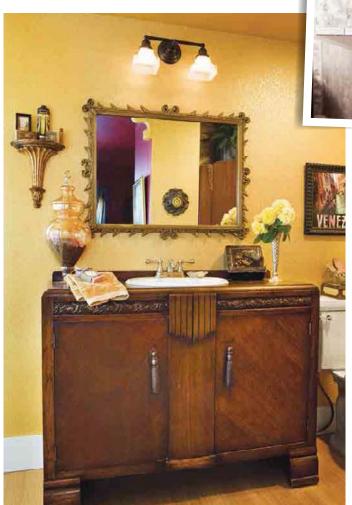
ABOVE: Devine Saffron walls and ceiling add a sense of comfort and glam when paired with a shimmering chandelier and cozy iron bed.

BEFORE: Paneling, dated carpet and aluminum windows were replaced with drywall, bamboo flooring and energy-efficient windows.





LEFT: Knowing she was going to crown her garagesale chest (whose embossed pieces she highlighted in gold) with a vintage bacchanal print, Charmaine chose an appropriate quote by Shakespeare (it, too, done in gold calligraphy) to add a bit of levity to the room.



BEFORE: The original vanity was donated to a Habitat ReStore.

LEFT: The handsome antique vanity was less costly than buying new-a polyurethane sealer keeps it free from water damage. Ralph Lauren Gold metallic paint and a gilded mirror add "Timeworn Elegance," which is Charmaine's signature look.



Maximizing_ inumal



ABOVE: "I collect those bowls and pitchers, but I use every one for flowers or serving," says homeowner Sherry Cohen. The cabinets below hold linens and other table-setting necessities. White shiplap walls showcase Sherry's collection of wonderfully whimsical artworks.

OPPOSITE: Space-savvy solutions abound in the home. A long banquette-stylishly cushioned with grain-sack pillows—supplies storage below and flexible seating. A collection of vintage chairs (previously at home in a lakeside hotel, a historic lake house, and the local post office) pull up to a French farm table chosen for its length and its narrower-than-usual width.

A Georgia couple make way for friends and family in a mountain hideaway that lives much larger than its dimensions.

n any given weekend, family and friends wander from guest quarters built amid the woods to Hut #1 to share conversations and meals or to just kick back in front of a fire. Hut #1 is the hospitable hub that serves three other huts, which have been added by homeowners Sherry and Jeff Cohen to their property over nearly two decades.

The convivial compound came about naturally—when the couple bought 5 acres on Lake Rabun in the mountains in northeastern Georgia, they discovered that to build a boathouse on their property, they would need to build a housing structure. Unsure of how often they would make the almost-twohour drive from their home in Atlanta, they threw up a bare-bones construction near a creek running through the property. The rustic structure wasn't fine enough to be called a cabin or a cottage, so they simply dubbed it "Hut."

"We put that first hut up as cheaply as we could, but we found that we started using it a lot," Sherry says. "It was our home away from home—after 15 years, we had built four huts. It grew organically and has become the gathering space for holidays, birthdays and other celebrations."

When filling out the bare bones of Hut #1, the couple made sure they took advantage of every inch of space. Two big porches—one under the roof in the front and a screened one on the back—augment interior space. Sherry employed a number of strategies to carve out room for entertaining and storage within the hut's 900 square feet.

"We needed big hangout spaces for playing games and doing puzzles," Sherry says. "We can have as many as 18 people hanging out at one time. As we designed and furnished different areas, I was very conscious of getting the storage we needed."

As she added storage, she also created functional display areas for her pottery and serving pieces. Built-in and open shelves and a variety of vintage pieces—from the kitchen's factory-cart island to an antique shoe-display rack in the dining room—bring personality and patina that stand out against the hut's white walls and wood floors.

"I love to collect art—paintings, sculptures, kids' artworks, pottery and folk art," Sherry says. "Our hut is quirky, whimsical, fun, casual and eclectic—and because this evolved over time, our setup is 100-percent efficient. People love to gather here and seem to enjoy the eclectic things we display."







RIGHT: Sherry's mom's mason jars double as colorful accessories and storage canisters that charmingly contain kitchen staples. The open shelves are stocked with glasses, dishes, mugs, and other items that are reached for often.

BELOW: Open shelves on either side of the range keep cooking oils and seasonings in view and at hand. The built-in shelves provide much-needed storage while freeing up cabinet interiors and drawers for larger cookware and utensils.





As we designed and furnished different areas,
I was very conscious of getting the storage we needed.



OPPOSITE: Placement of the sink beneath windows overlooking the creek drove the design of the kitchen, which houses generous storage and prep spaces. A metal factory cart provides an industrial profile while supplying storage, an indestructible form, and a roomy prep surface. "When we are getting ready for meals, we can have four or five people in here cooking or prepping food," Sherry says.







LEFT: Fancifully upholstered chairs and a bright yellow sofa boost the fun in this living room corner. An industrial cart converts to a coffee table and display platform for Sherry's globe collection. Folk-art circus figures parade across deep windowsills; a pantry tucks beneath the staircase rising to the second floor.



ABOVE: This vintage bench holds books below and exhibits folk-art pieces up top. When there's a crowd on hand, Sherry clears off the bench to create an extra seat.

OPPOSITE: A strikingly striped rug, which drove the home's color scheme. visually connects the living room's two seating areas, including these neutralhued chairs that invite people to linger in front of the fire.

ADDING STYLE IN PETITE SPOTS

Not only did the Cohens make way for household goods, books and games, they also created places for showcasing the collections that turn their hut into a warm and welcoming home. Here's how you can stretch your smallest spaces to fashion personality-plus interiors.

* CLEVERLY CONSTRUCT. Include banquettes and window seats that offer below-deck storage for large and/or unsightly necessities that aren't used regularly. Tuck closets or display shelves inside a staircase's base wall. Build-in bookcases and mount shelves to hold pretty and practical objects near where they'll be used most often.

* PICK MULTIFUNCTIONAL PIECES. Opt for ottomans, nightstands and coffee tables that supply storage compartments. Bring in benches and footstools that also function as seats.

* BE PURPOSEFUL WITH DISPLAYS. Make your exhibits work harder by showcasing fetchingly formed collections that not only brighten your interiors but also serve a purpose. Think pottery bowls, prettily profiled pitchers, statuesque cake stands, and serving trays sporting painted scenes.

* ENHANCE SPATIAL PERCEPTIONS. Paint walls and ceilings white and opt for one type of neutral flooring to make small spaces feel larger. Leave windows undressed whenever possible—your rooms will appear less cluttered and more light will come inside.

RIGHT: Three square windows pull light into the master bedroom. Nightstands equipped with doors and shelves work with a small closet and a dresser (not pictured) to provide storage for clothing and all sorts of gear in need of a home.







ABOVE: The custom-built vanity offers a fine-looking form and fine-tuned function. It features two sinks, lots of cabinet and drawer space, and a lower shelf that holds towels and a basket of necessities.

ABOVE: Sherry wanted the master bathroom to be accessed via an extrawide doorway so that views and sunlight could flow into the bedroom. The barnstyle door, which takes up less floor space than a conventional swinging door, slides closed for privacy.

OPPOSITE: The screened porch opens the home to all sorts of entertaining possibilities. The 9-foot table is served by another banquette/ storage seat and works in tandem with the interior dining table to handle a multitude of diners. Festivities often spill over into other areas of the porch, including a conversation grouping assembled around the porch's fireplace, which boasts a raised hearth that provides fireside seats.







Bridging the Chace

A Michigan couple turn the **tiny farmhouse** between their childhood homes
into a **minimalists' mansion**.

organ Ford and her husband, Doug, were cattle-farming neighbors growing up, separated only by Doug's grandparents' Lowell, Michigan, farm—so it seemed fitting that when they married, they bought the home that bridged their families' properties all their lives. Though small itself at 1,800 square feet, renovating the 1861 farmhouse was no small task: Doug and a handful of helpers did all the work themselves—from jacking up the foundation and knocking down walls to replacing electrical, drywall, plumbing and insulation—and Morgan added the sweetly simple and minimalist decorating style she's known for on her popular blog, The White Farmhouse. The result is a spacious, breezy, inviting home that makes the best possible use of space for the couple, who now have two young children.

"Now, the kids can be playing with toys and I can be with them in the kitchen or wherever I am," says Morgan of the decision to open up the main-floor living space. "I can always feel like we're together."

With just two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a single 2 x 2 closet for the entire house, the space is still humble. That's why it was especially important that they wait to remodel, first living in the home a year so they could learn what they really needed.

"Have patience, learn the feel and the space of the rooms," Morgan says. When they did finally overhaul the house, they still held off on much of the kitchen, which today boasts crisp white cabinets—that final transformation occurred even after these photos, in a reveal documented on Morgan's Instagram feed, which has nearly 50,000 followers.

"I'm just a minimalist," Morgan says. "I'm not a Type-A person, I don't need things all in order, I just like less things. Less is more, and just keeping it open and airy."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GRIDLEY + GRAVES.



WRITTEN BY MAGGIE GINSBERG.

LEFT: In addition to fostering face-to-face conversation by keeping a TV-free living room—and a coffee table on casters that rolls away for more play space—the Fords keep all of their cleaning appliances and supplies in the beautiful corner armoire.



ABOVE: The Fords heat their entire house with wood. Building a raised platform for the ceramic woodstove not only keeps crawling babies and toddlers safer but it also allows for storage underneath.





LEFT: Rather than use precious cabinet space, Morgan curates a thoughtful selection of her most-used spices, displayed in a wall cutout.





ABOVE: Clutter quickly makes a small space feel even smaller, especially in the kitchen. Morgan gathers any loose or sentimental items in a vintage wooden tray, including the acorn cutting board she swiped from her mother.

LEFT: When the Fords converted the dining area into a mudroom, they gained a badly needed, storagefilled buffer between the outdoors and the kitchen-but they were also left with an empty gap that used to be a doorway. They filled in the space with white shelves and a coffee bar, allowing for curtained storage beneath that hides wire shelves of canned goods.





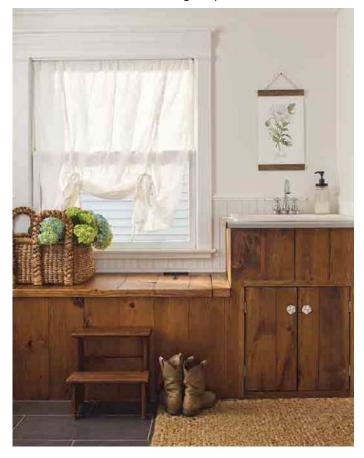
LEFT: Bright white window trim against softer alabaster walls creates the subtlest contrast and the perfect backdrop against this hutch Morgan fell in love with at a barn sale. It not only provides badly needed storage but also stitches together the walls and the rich wood tones of the restored floorboards.

BELOW: Once a dining room, this new mudroom allows some breathing room between the main entry and the kitchen. Doug built the hinged storage bench and cabinet with repurposed knotty pine boards from the original home, and he installed a sink he found in his grandpa's barn.

minimalist. I'm not a Type-A person, I don't need things all in order, I just like less things."



OPPOSITE: The staircase used to be at the back of the house; when the couple moved it, they reused the old steps to create a pathway to the stone basement (then only accessible via "Dorothy Doors" outside the house). The new stairway offers a wider, safer route to the second floor as well as access to basement storage.





LEFT: Although they remodeled the entire home, the Fords opted against adding closets because they chew up so much space. Hanging DIY drop-cloth curtains against open shelving with baskets and crates allows for natural light and a less oppressive feel.

RIGHT: When the bathroom vanity the couple purchased didn't suit the space, leaving an awkward gap between the sink and tub and a lack of both countertop space and drawers, Doug went back to the drawing board. He used leftover oak floorboards to build a cabinet and countertop, adding open shelves with baskets for optimized storage and a panel curtain for quick access to plumbing.





ABOVE: Small spaces mean tough choices and, although this was potentially the only spot to add a true closet, Morgan knew she wanted a first-floor laundry more. Just like in her sons' room, curtains instead of doors keep the space light and airy.



Tips for Small-House Living

Like others that live in small houses, Morgan Ford offers these ideas for making the most of the space.

- $oldsymbol{1}$. Be selective about what you bring in. It's easier to manage fewer things than to create storage solutions, and you're also more likely to collect pieces you truly love.
- 2. Lighter or monochrome colors, bare walls and clean countertops make a small space feel bigger.
- 3. Just because it's a bread machine doesn't mean it needs to be in the kitchen. Keep seldom-used small appliances off the counters and out of cabinet space; instead, store them off-site in the basement or garage.
- 4. Baskets offer a portable, flexible and affordable mode of keeping linens and clutter contained yet accessible.
- 5. Take renovations in steps. Allow yourself time to live in the space to learn what you're truly lacking, and if budget is a concern, remodel in increments like the Morgans did with their kitchen.

ABOVE: The space between these windows would have felt too crowded and narrow with a dresser. so Morgan opted for a skinny mantel. It also allows her space to display photographs without marring the walls. Doug repurposed wood from the remodel to build the headboard.

fer World

A cheerful color palette and creative storage solutions imbue an Arkansas farmhouse with distinct character



PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK LOHMAN. * STYLED BY SUNDAY HENDRICKSON. * WRITTEN BY CHERYL HACKETT.





ownsizing is certainly a catalyst for change. In 2011, Melanie and Bill Siegel traded an expansive home for the chance to build a smaller residence in Conway, Arkansas. Their new neighborhood is noted for lovely streetscapes that recall America's beloved architecture. While building their dream home, Melanie discovered her dream job. Her career highlights include graphic artist and children's book illustrator, yet this project made her realize that interior design was her true calling. The mid-life epiphany inspired Melanie to pursue an interior design degree and launch a new career.

"Building the house changed my life," Melanie says. "We had so much fun. I loved putting my hands on every design aspect of the house." The Siegels built a New England–style farmhouse with a barn red exterior. Melanie says, "The architecture reminds me of homes we admired in the Northeast."

Melanie planned the interior so that each space is beautiful and welcoming. She says, "My home is a blend of rustic, contemporary and eclectic styles. The tiles we used for the kitchen backsplash were the jumping-off point." That cheerful combination of black, white, orange, green, taupe and turquoise is echoed in paint finishes, upholstery, window treatments, area rugs, pillows and pottery.

Downsizing presented a critical challenge. Melanie explains, "Maximizing storage is important. I think of rooms in cubic feet rather than square feet. I opened up every nook and cranny to create storage." Among her many solutions include using space beneath the staircase for a

OPPOSITE: The light blue ceiling and white structural beams enhance the architecture of Melanie and Bill Siegel's living room. Like visual stepping stones, the drapes, seating, pillows, and area rug resonate the same fanciful colors that define the kitchen backsplash.



laundry room, outfitting an interior doorway with bookcases, using drawers instead of lower kitchen cabinets and creating a mudroom with lockers.

Unique DIY elements make the chic home appealing. "My design influences are travel, nature, fine art, and architecture," Melanie says. "My creative mind is always clicking." For example, she suspended a lantern from a rope and antique pulley in the dining room, wove a jute wall covering in the mudroom, and fashioned a vanity

ABOVE: A library was created between the sitting room and living room by simply adding white shelves and bookcases and a library ladder. Painting the back wall of the shelves green punctuates the space with vibrant color.

skirt from dish towels in the powder room. Perhaps it comes as no surprise when Melanie says, "People always say we have a very happy house."



ABOVE: Glass-fronted upper cabinets showcase favorite dishware, lower drawers house cookware, and a pantry closet contains dry goods. The central island doubles as a work space and eating area.





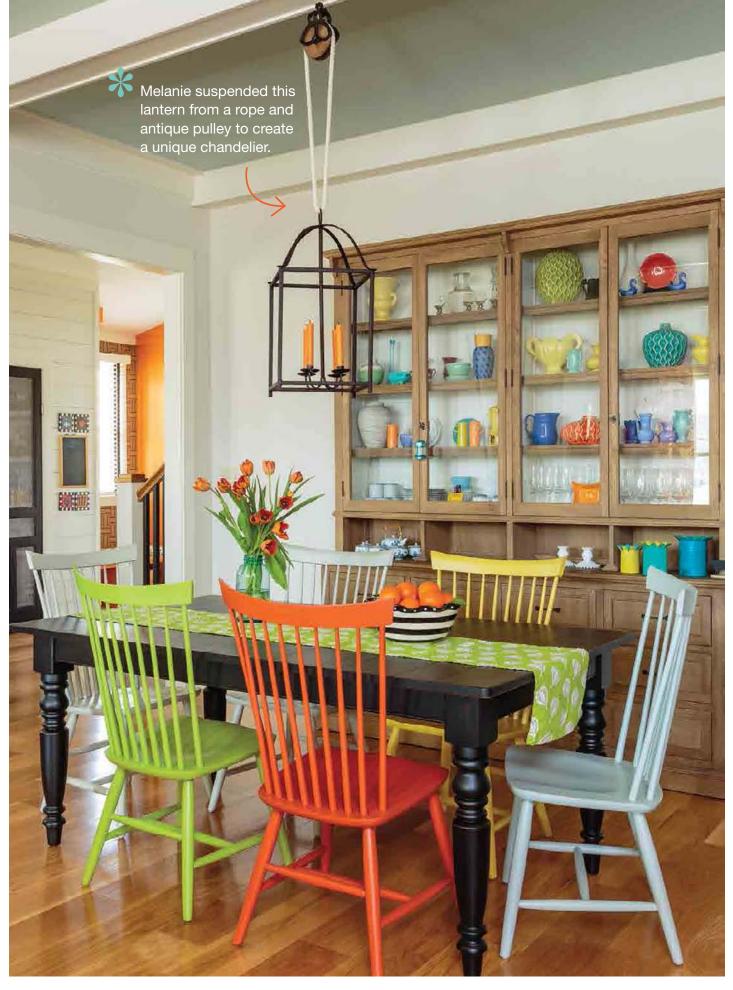
LEFT: Using drawers in place of base cabinets is a more efficient use of storage space. Utensils, cookware, dishes and other kitchen sundries are more accessible and easier to organize when stored in drawers.







LEFT: Melanie purchased the stamped ceramic bin pulls with handpainted letters on Etsy. Each drawer dons a different letter of the alphabet.





ABOVE: Melanie enjoys collecting pottery from the Arkansas region. The classic forms and vibrant primary colors can be appreciated more when displayed against the white cabinet wall.

OPPOSITE: Life imitates art in the dining room where the playful colors of the chairs are mirrored by the pottery showcased in the china cabinet. Melanie painted the walls and the inside of the cabinet the same shade of white. This technique makes the room look larger.

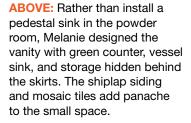
I think of rooms in cubic feet rather than square feet."



ABOVE: A narrow section of wall located between the coat closet and laundry room is outfitted with hooks and provides additional space for hanging clothes and artwork. The green paint on the stair risers matches the green tiles in the kitchen backsplash.

RIGHT: Sliding barn door hardware is a great spacesaving solution. Rather than swing into a room, doors slide to open and close.





RIGHT: The bathroom is distinguished by a single wall painted orange. The bold hue makes the space appear larger and provides the perfect backdrop for a round mirror and pair of sconces.





OPPOSITE: The new claw-foot tub recalls the charm of yesteryear. A pair of leaded-glass elliptical windows heighten the visual interest of the space.





*Maximizing storage is important. I opened up every nook and cranny to create storage.





LEFT: While wandering through a local farm-supply store, Melanie discovered leather straps in the equine department. The straps cost \$8 each and function as locker handles. For a touch of whimsy, she accented each strap with a paper label and metal letter.

LEFT: Melanie designed the mudroom to include a window seat and a pair of lockers above three large cubbies. The layout provides much-needed storage and a comfortable place to sit.

SAVVY STORAGE FOR SMALL SPACES

The secret to making small areas look spacious is minimizing clutter on horizontal surfaces. Try these tips:

* COUNTERS: Routinely recycle unwanted mail, newspapers and magazines. Scan necessary paperwork and store digital files on your computer.

* FLOORS: Free up space by hanging jackets, purses and backpacks on hooks mounted to the wall.

* FURNITURE: Consider trays to stylishly organize items that must be displayed on tables and bureaus. You can find vintage serving trays at most flea markets and thrift shops.

* CABINETS: Install roll-out drawers to increase storage in kitchens and bathrooms. A variety of roll-out drawers can be purchased online.

Free Issue for Country Sampler Living Simply Buyers!











Space Savers



Make the most of your space with clever, creative and totally doable storage solutions. See new ideas for storing household items, learn ways to combine elements into double-duty pieces, discover new uses for favorite items you just can't part with and find creative ways to carve out a home office.

Chung Chung Chunction Use every square inch of your space wisely! Cot inspired by those

Use every square inch of your space wisely!
Get inspired by these creative projects and customize them to meet your needs.

TRY A FLOATING NIGHTSTAND

This nightstand is the ultimate idea for tiny bedrooms! Manda McGrath at The Merrythought chose the design because it takes up no floor space and offers just enough room to hold necessities but not enough for items to "collect." It also features a slot that's perfect if you use your cell phone as your alarm clock. Cut a 1" x 8" pine board to your desired length for the top piece of your nightstand. Cut a 5/4" x 6" pine board to the same length for the wall support. Manda's nightstand is 16"I. Using a table saw with a dado blade, cut the phone slot 1" from the edge the entire width of the top board. (Determine the width by measuring your own phone. Manda cut hers $^{3}/_{8}$ "w x $^{3}/_{8}$ "d at a 15-degree angle.) Drill a hole through the top piece to fit the phone's charging cord. Place wood glue along the top edge of the wall support board and glue to the top piece. Clamp together and nail. Once the glue is dry, remove clamps and sand. Attach to the wall using screws.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY MANDA MCGRATH OF THEMERRYTHOUGHT.COM.





TURN OUTDATED INTO OUTSTANDING

Repurpose an outdated CD or DVD tower into a handy bathroom storage cabinet. These slim furniture pieces are perfect for tight corners and small spaces. Coat the surface with fresh paint and then lightly distress with sandpaper. When dry, fill the shelves with washcloths and hand towels, soaps and lotions, and glass jars filled with other small toiletries.



If you don't have an old storage tower in your attic or basement, check your local secondhand storethere are still plenty to be found!

REINVENT A DRAWER AS A BOOKCASE

It's always fun to give old items a new life, and this project is a great example. Christy James at Confessions of a Serial DIYer saved this drawer from her son's changing table and made it into a little book caddy. To create your own, first paint the drawer with your chosen colors. Christy layered hers with homemade chalky-finish paint in cottage white, Annie Sloan's Graphite and Annie Sloan's Duck Egg Blue. When your paint is dry, sand the drawer a bit and then give it a coat of clear wax. Install a pretty knob on the front of the drawer and add four short legs to the bottom.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRISTY JAMES OF CONFESSIONSOFASERIALDIYER.COM.













Allison swapped out dated hardware for these stylish black pulls.

HIDE DRAWERS UNDER YOUR SOFA

If you have a sofa with several inches of clearance underneath, use that space! Allison Hop at The Golden Sycamore repurposed two dresser drawers as hideaway holders for coloring books, board games and small toys. First, cut off the "lip" around the edges of your drawers and then sand the drawer fronts. Remove or mask off the drawer pulls and paint the wood whatever color you like. When dry, finish with wax or sealer. Add adhesive felt pads to the bottom of each drawer so they'll move easily and won't scratch hard floors. Then, toss in toys, games, books or magazines, and push the drawers under your sofa.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALLISON HOP OF THEGOLDENSYCAMORE.COM.

CUSTOMIZE WITH CRATES

This simple shelving unit is budget-friendly, easy to make and totally customizable for your space. Bridget O'Connor and Casey Finn at The DIY Playbook made this mudroom version in 10 minutes with unfinished wood crates and large binder clips. Arrange your crates vertically and horizontally and then secure them together with binder clips. You can leave your crates unfinished like these, or stain or spray paint them to fit your style.



After clipping your crates together, attach the entire unit to the wall.





Arrange your knobs and hooks to showcase favorite jewelry pieces without too much overlap.





PUT JEWELRY ON DISPLAY

Don't toss jewelry in a drawer-reinvent a wood cabinet door and two wood drawer fronts to create a wall-hung jewelry holder. Paint the front and sides of the door and drawer fronts with your chosen color. When dry, cover with a lighter paint. Lightly sand the edges and other areas to expose the darker paint underneath. Lightly add Metallic Lustre to the edges and other areas with a cosmetic sponge or brush. Coat all surfaces with a matte sealer. Attach decorative hinges to the left and right side of the cabinet door. Center the drawer fronts along the door and attach hinges. The side drawer panels are not intended to fully close, but they tilt in to give the piece a dimensional look. Choose an assortment of knobs and hardware to fit your assembled piece. Drill holes to attach the hardware to the door and drawer fronts, and use the appropriate pieces to secure. Add picture hangers to the back of the piece and hang it on your wall.

RESOURCES: TAUPE TREASURE AND DREAM LINEN SHABBY CHIC CHALK & CLAY PAINT BY RACHEL ASHWELL, SUPPLIED BY BUNGALOW 47, WWW. BUNGALOW47.COM. DECO ART ICED ESPRESSO METALLIC LUSTRE, WWW.DECOART.COM

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF **WASTED SPACE**

No room for towel storage in your small bathroom? Jordan Hurd at The 2 Seasons came up with a creative solution—a simple box shelf above the bathroom door! To make use of this often-overlooked space in your home, first attach a support board to the wall and then build a box to sit on top of it. Trim the exterior with straight boards or other trim that matches the style in your room. When your shelf is complete, fill the nail holes, caulk and paint.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JORDAN HURD OF THE2SEASONS.COM.



For a similar look, you could also install an open shelf on brackets above your door.







CREATE AN AREA TO STORE AND READ BOOKS

With a few construction skills (or a premade shelving unit turned on its side), you can make both a cozy window seat to catch up on your reading and also an area to store your books in between novels. Secure the wood structure under your window between two built-in shelves. Cover a foam cushion with fabric and attach it to the top of the piece.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK LOHMAN.

TURN STAIR SPACE INTO STORAGE SPACE

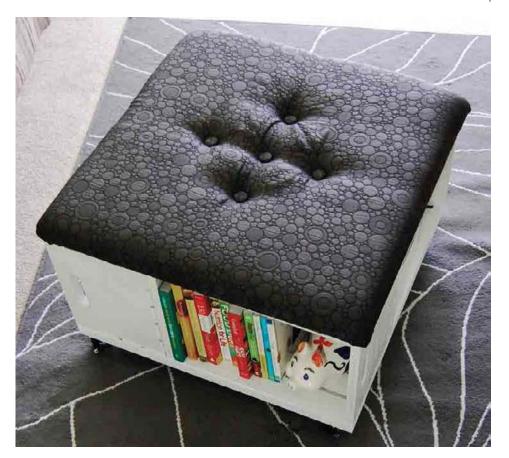
These bookcases that follow the stair treads are a great way to gain extra storage. You can do the same by purchasing premade shelving units in varied heights and positioning them up against your staircase in graduated heights to give the look of custom-built shelving. Screw the pieces together side by side, and attach a wide piece of trim to the bottom of the shelves to unify them.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MARK LOHMAN.

TURN CRATES INTO A STORAGE OTTOMAN

Replace your standard coffee table with a multipurpose piece that offers storage space as well as a comfy spot to rest your feet. Monica Shanks at Mon Makes Things was inspired by a coffee table made from wood crates, but she put her own spin on the project by adding an upholstered top to turn the design into a storage ottoman. Follow these steps to make your own:

- 1. Arrange four 9½" x 18" wood crates on their sides with each opening facing out as shown in the photos. Pre-drill three holes in the handle end of one crate and through to the back of the next crate. Attach the crates together with 1¼" screws. Repeat with each crate until all four are secured together, as shown in the bottom right photo.
- 2. Cut two 2" x 4" x 8' boards so you have two 27½"I pieces and three 20½"I pieces. Arrange in a square, making sure that the ends of the long pieces are flush with the edges of the short pieces. Attach together with corner brackets and screws. For added support, place the third short piece across the middle and attach it with four more corner brackets.
- 3. Align your frame on the underside of the crates. Pre-drill a hole in each corner through the frame and into the underside of the crate. Drive in 2½" screws. Place a 2" caster in each corner and attach to the frame using screws.
- 4. To make your upholstered top, cut a thin sheet of mahogany underlayment into a 28" square. Purchase enough 2"-thick foam to cover your wood. Measure and mark the center of the foam and then measure out 5" from the center toward all four sides and mark. Dig out a small hole in the foam at the center and at each mark.
- **5.** Place two layers of batting over your foam so that there is enough overhang on each side to staple it to the underside of the wood. When stapling, make sure to work opposite sides in sequence and pull the batting tight.
- 6. Repeat the measuring and marking process on your wood sheet, and predrill small holes at the center and each mark. Feel around the batting/foam to find the holes you dug out previously. Push the batting down into the holes as much as possible, cutting out some batting if







necessary. Push a long upholstery needle through the hole from the wood side to verify that the hole in the wood matches up with the hole in the batting/foam and make any necessary adjustments.

7. Cover five make-to-match buttons in your upholstery fabric following the package instructions. Thread a 16" piece of polyester cord through your button. Next, thread both ends of the cord through your needle. Drape your fabric over the batting so that it is square with the top and there is excess on each side for stapling. Locate the holes in the batting/foam and push your upholstery needle through the fabric, through the hole in the batting/foam, and through the hole in the wood. When you

have pulled your cord through the hole in the wood, push the button against the wood and pull the cord tight. Staple the cord down in a zigzag pattern. Repeat for each button. When all your buttons are secured, staple your fabric down around the perimeter just as you did your batting.

8. Leave your ottoman unfinished or paint to match your decor. Once dry, trim excess fabric and cording ends and lay it upside down on the floor. Carefully flip your crates upside down on top of the upholstered top. At each corner, drive a 1" wood screw through the top of the crate down into the wood sheet of the top.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY MONICA SHANKS OF MONMAKESTHINGS.COM.

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FURNISHINGS

Make your furniture work overtime! These **double-duty pieces** will earn their keep in your small home

DESIGN A DINING TABLE

Minimize your use of floor space while maximizing kitchen storage by creating a custom dining table. Place two table-height metal or wood shelving units side by side and then add a rectangular glass tabletop. Arrange your dinnerware, glasses and flatware neatly on the shelves. You'll get easy access to your dining essentials and free up storage space in your kitchen for other necessities. (Not to mention you're creating a trendy display with your everyday dishes!) Choose the size of bookshelves and glass top that work best in your space. Add an upholstered bench on one or both sides of the table to serve as comfortable, multipurpose seating.



FIND A VERSATILE BENCH

Dining benches come in a variety of styles and can be used all around the home. Here, a narrow wood bench makes an attractive coffee table in a cozy living room. When unexpected company arrives, quickly shift the bench over to serve as extra seating.





Benches are fairly simple to build, so try your hand at crafting your own multipurpose piece.



Check out office organization supplies for designs like this one, which is likely meant for files or magazines.



HANG BASKETS ON AN ISLAND

Wire baskets are so versatile in small spaces. Courtney Affrunti at Golden Boys and Me hung these two chicken-wire baskets on the side of her kitchen island. It's the perfect location for storing (and displaying!) colorful rolled dish towels in the top basket and paper plates and lunch bags in the bottom. Hang similar baskets in your kitchen to dress up a blank space and keep everyday goods in view.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY COURTNEY AFFRUNTI OF GOLDENBOYSANDME.COM.

SEW AN EASY TABLE SKIRT

Turn your accent table into a pretty piece that is invaluable when you need extra seating to serve a small meal, play games or gather for coffee or tea. By simply adding a fabric skirt to your table, you provide hidden storage underneath for stools that pull out easily. Depending on your table material—wicker, wood or metal-there are many options for creating and attaching a skirt. For our wicker table, we made a pleated fabric skirt and hung it with metal clips. To make a similar skirt, first determine how much fabric you'll need to accommodate your table. This will depend on the fabric width and the number and width of your pleats. Inverted pleats (or reverse box pleats) are formed by bringing two folded edges to a center point on the outside of the material, which creates a box pleat on the inside. This takes three times its width in fabric. If several pieces of fabric are being used, attach them side to side lengthwise by sewing a seam from top to bottom. Measure where you want the center of your first pleat to be on the fabric and mark vertically with a straight pin. Make equal-distance marks on both sides of the center point of the fabric. For example: If your pleat is 2" long, you would mark the fabric at 1" and 2" from the center, with the fold being at the 2" mark. Beginning on one side, fold fabric from the outside mark (2") to the center point so the fold rests on the center point, forming one side of the pleat. Pin the pleat vertically. Repeat this process on the right side. Press with a steam iron. Measure the distance from the center of your first pleat to the center of your next pleat, continuing throughout the panel. When



all pleats are marked and pressed, fold over the top fabric edge, pin and press. Sew a seam along the entire top edge, including the pleats. Fold over the bottom edge and sew a seam on the entire bottom edge. Attach a clip with an open hook to the center of each pleat and then hook onto the table. Overlap any extra fabric (if necessary) and secure with a clip at the end.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY COURTNEY AFFRUNTI OF GOLDENBOYSANDME.COM.



Clips, ribbon,
elastic or hookand-loop tape can
be used to attach
a pleated fabric
skirt to a table.





When the hooks are empty, use them to hang visitors' coats, a celebratory banner or a row of colorful scarves.



HANG SEATS WITH STYLE

Brightly painted folding chairs can easily double as wall decor when not in use. Hang a group of chairs on securely mounted hooks to save valuable floor space and create visual impact on an otherwise empty wall. Whenever extra seating is necessary, simply remove the chairs from the hooks.



PRACTICAL PIECE:

You can also use the rack for dish towels, serving utensils, measuring cups and more.

DISPLAY MUGS ON THE WALL

Build a storage piece that also doubles as a beautiful display. Ashley Turner at Shanty 2 Chic designed this rustic piece to hold 12 mugs. Make your own by cutting four 36"I pieces from two 2" x 4" x 8' boards, two 241/2"I pieces from a 1" x 3" x 8'l board and two 24½" pieces from a 1" x 2" x 8'l board. Assemble the side caps or "L" pieces by attaching the 1" x 2" x 241/2" I and 1" x 3" x 241/2" I to each other with wood glue and 11/4" brad nails. Line up the 2" x 4" x 36"I pieces, leaving 31/2" between each board, and attach the side caps with 11/4" brad nails. Stain the wood and install hooks as desired. To attach your finished rack to the wall, drive in 3" screws from the front of the piece into the wall studs.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHLEY TURNER OF SHANTY-2-CHIC.COM.





INSTALL A FLOATING BOOK DISPLAY

Keep favorite books close at hand and create conversation-starting wall art at the same time. Barb McMahon at Happy Simple liked the look of invisible bookshelves but not the high price tag, so she made her own from metal angle brackets. Install the brackets in the wall studs or use drywall anchors to ensure they can hold the weight of the books. Then, you're ready to stack your floating books.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BARB MCMAHON OF HAPPYSIMPLE.COM.



STACK HEXAGONS INTO PLANTERS

Use one simple plan to configure several different planter styles for your home. Mindi Carwin at My Love 2 Create experimented with these hexagons to make hanging and stacked planters for a variety of herbs. For both styles, the wood is cut at 30 degrees on each end (not parallel), with the long side measuring 6". The actual angle is 60 degrees, but because the saw is at 90 degrees, you have to cut at 30 degrees to get a 60-degree angle. Since you'll be making several hexagons, it helps to make a jig to keep them accurate. To do this, cut and assemble one hexagon from scrap wood and screw the pieces into a piece of plywood. Then, using the jig as your guide, glue and nail your cut pieces together one at a time, keeping each long side on the inside of your shape. To make a bottom for your planter, trace your hexagon onto plywood and cut out the shape with a jigsaw. Then, place it inside your hexagon and secure it from the outside with 2" nails. Mindi made her hanging planters by sandwiching a hexagon cut from a 1" x 2" board in the middle of two hexagons cut from a 2" x 2" board. The back is a full plywood hexagon, and the front is a plywood halfhexagon attached in the same manner. Mindi made her stacked planters by attaching four 2" x 2" hexagons atop one another. When assembling your hexagons, put the top shape face down and place the next shape on top and countersink three screws into three sides. Add the next piece on top and countersink the screws into the other three sides. Alternate the sides you screw into each time. When you're finished, drill a few drainage holes and stain and seal each planter.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY MINDI CARWIN OF MYLOVE2CREATE.COM.



Emphasize a display area by wallpapering it with old newspaper.







This salvaged dresser's cracked boards and dinged surface only add to its appeal.

MAKE OVER A DRESSER

Dressers don't have to be relegated to the bedroom. Jamie Lundstrom at So Much Better with Age rescued one that was headed for the Dumpster and transformed it into an amazing living room storage piece. For a similar look, remove the top and bottom drawers from a salvaged dresser. Replace the drawer rails with boards if necessary. Paint the outside and remaining drawers with two shades of Annie Sloan Chalk Paint and finish with wax. Install industrial-style bookplate pulls to the drawer fronts. Place baskets on the new shelf and folded blankets on the open bottom shelf, and you're ready to relocate the bedroom staple to your living area. It's perfect for storage and pretty enough to serve as a side table.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMIE LUNDSTROM OF SOMUCHBETTERWITHAGE.COM.



SUPPLY TIP:

Find premade wood crates at many homeimprovement and crafts stores.

ADD PANTRY STORAGE TO AN ISLAND

This kitchen island offers an extra work surface as well as lots of storage for produce, pasta, canned items and more. Build your own from plywood and premade crates using plans from Mindi Carwin at My Love 2 Create, or make over a bookshelf or island you already have. Slide crates onto shelves to use as large drawers. If your crates don't have open handles, install drawer pulls instead. Stack vegetable crates and nail together for storing produce. Attach crates and shelves to the side of your island or bookshelf to hold spices and cookbooks. Add chalkboard labels, towel hooks, casters-whatever you like!

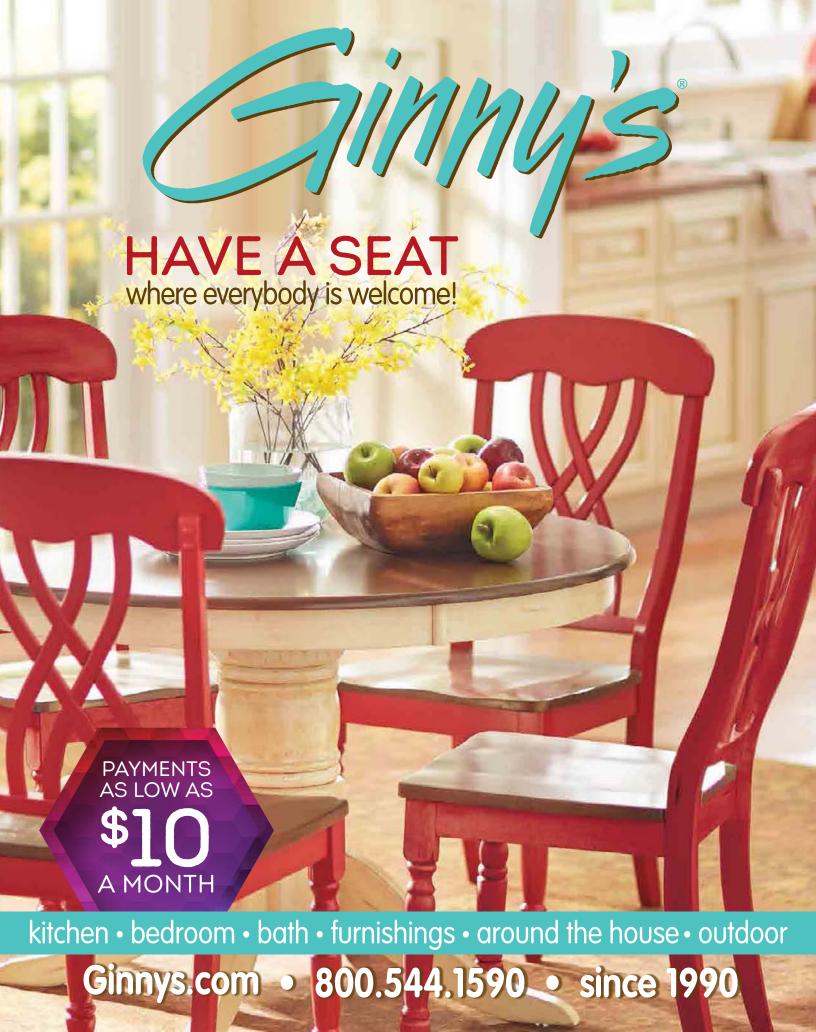
DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY MINDI CARWIN OF MYLOVE2CREATE.COM.



HIDE AWAY A TINY BAR

This clever end table serves double-duty as storage for a tiny bar. The table is designed to look like a stack of old books, but you could create something similar by simply using a lidded box set atop a short stool or table. (You may need to cut the legs down on the table.) Faux paint the outside of the box to give it that elegant look and line the inside with felt.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BLACKSTONEEDGE.COM.



Turn Old

Keep nostalgic items on hand but also have them serve a functional purpose by transposing them into something new and different.





CHEAP CHIC:

This tray project cost Christy just \$6-\$1 for the frame, \$5 for the handles and the pickets were free!

Reimagine Fence Pickets as a Tray

Want to keep a small memory of your previous yard? Christy James at Confessions of a Serial DIYer upcycled fence pickets into a rustic tray. Shop your home for an unused photo frame or find one at a thrift store. Cut your pickets to fit inside the frame. Apply a coat of white latex paint to the pickets and then wipe off with a dry rag for a weathered, coastal look. Paint your frame with chalky-finish paint, sand it a bit and then follow with a coat of clear wax. To attach the pickets to the frame, use a few thin wood scraps (Christy used wooden rulers!) and secure them across the pickets with finishing nails. Paint the bottom, let dry, and add self-adhesive felt discs to the wood scraps to protect your furniture. Install metal handles, such as screen door handles or drawer pulls, to either side of the frame with screws.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRISTY JAMES OF CONFESSIONSOFASERIALDIYER.COM.

Save a Pillow for an Ottoman

Repurpose a favorite pillow into a useful storage footstool. Many pillows have a removable cover with a zipper on the back, which makes it easy to create this piece. Attach a decorative button in the center of the pillow by sewing from the front of the cover completely through to the back of the pillow insert. Choose a wood box or crate relative to the size of your pillow. Add a set of decorative legs using the appropriate hardware, both available at home-improvement or hardware stores. Install decorative handles on opposite sides of the box. Cut a piece of sanded plywood 1/4" smaller than the inside dimensions of the box. Insert the cut piece of wood into the back of the pillow cover through the zippered opening, center on the pillow, and zip the cover closed (see photo A). Place the pillow on top of the box, pushing the wood piece down until the pillow rests on the box frame. Place the finished piece near your favorite chair. It's perfect for resting your feet, but remember that it's probably not sturdy enough to use as a seat.





When installing your knobs, be sure to leave enough room for the clock hands to pass by unimpeded.





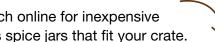


Top a Table with a Clock

Rather than part with a large wall clock or another favorite (but too big!) circular wall piece, repurpose it as a fun top for a dining table. Choose a table base that your clock will sit on evenly and the mechanism on the back remains exposed. Select decorative knobs that will be placed at the 12, 3, 6 and 9 markers. The knobs must have a flat area on top to provide a stable surface for a matching piece of glass to rest. Drill the appropriate-size holes in the clock to accommodate the screws on each knob. Use the nut and washers to tighten knobs on the underside of the clock. Add self-adhesive clear glass-protective circles to the top center of each knob. Finish by adding an appropriate-size glass tabletop.



Search online for inexpensive glass spice jars that fit your crate.





Store Spices in Bottle Crates

Vintage bottle crates with their original wood dividers are great for organizing small items. Take a tip from Jesse Dresbach at Nine Red and turn two Coca-Cola crates into a large spice rack. Just position the crates end to end and then slide in glass spice jars. If you'd like some extra color, rub bright paint onto the dividers and store your spice jars with the clear bottoms facing out.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JESSE DRESBACH OF NINERED.BLOGSPOT.COM.



GET A DEAL:

Dense foam is expensive, so look for a store coupon or search for better prices online.

Upcycle a Soda Crate into a Footstool

Vintage soda crates are nostalgic treasures that make cool centerpieces, knickknack shelves and even footstools! Brenda McDevitt at Cottage 4C needed a smaller ottoman, so she made her own using a yellow Coca-Cola crate and four legs from a \$5 thrift-store table. Whether you use new wood legs or those salvaged from another table, paint and distress the legs to match your crate. Brenda painted hers yellow and then added dark walnut stain. Drill into the legs and attach them from inside the crate with long lag screws and washers. Purchase a piece of dense foam to fit inside the crate and a small pillow to sit on top. Wrap the pillow and foam with a piece of fabric, folding and pinning it underneath to secure.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRENDA MCDEVITT



Reassemble a Bed as a Bench

Antique Jenny Lind beds are beautiful, but the mattress size required can be difficult and costly to find. Danielle Driscoll at Silver Pennies decided to turn her bed into a bench that highlights the details of the Jenny Lind design. First, cut the footboard in half. Shorten the two halves to the appropriate depth. Drill pocket holes on the inside of the sides, in the boards. Attach the sides to the back (headboard) with pocket-hole screws. Countersink screws in the back at the top to attach the top to the sides. Cut the slats for the seat to the appropriate width and length. Drill pocket holes on the sides and attach the slats with pocket-hole screws. The cut sides will reveal bare wood, so stain those areas to match the rest of the piece.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANIELLE DRISCOLL OF FINDINGSILVERPENNIES.COM.







SALVAGE STYLE:

Reuse some of the bed's rusty bolts to give the bench a more timeworn look.



Display Family China

Heirloom china that is sentimental but seldom used doesn't always fit into the plan when simplifying your living space. Keep one special dish for yourself, and then offer the rest of the set to another family member, or divide into separate pieces or place settings so that each relative gets a remembrance to keep. Give the piece you kept a place of honor in your home. Using appropriate hardware, hang the dish on the wall and surround it with an open frame painted to coordinate with the china's pattern. This creates a unique three-dimensional display that highlights your individual piece.



Sarah spray painted her window screen with Krylon's Catalina Mist.

Frame Heirloom **Doilies**

Many families have crocheted doilies that have been passed down through the generations, but what can you do with them? Sarah Norton Ramberg at Sadie Seasongoods framed these doilies from her grandmother to make them into a display piece for her master bedroom. First, find a lightweight window frame with no glass. Cut inexpensive window screen to size and staple it to the back of the frame. You can even spray paint the window screen like Sarah did if you'd like a bit more color. Arrange your doilies on the front of the screen and pin them in place. Stitch the doilies to the screen from the backside, removing the pins when you're finished. See more detailed instructions at SadieSeasongoods.com.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH NORTON RAMBERG AT SADIESEASONGOODS.COM.



Carue Out a Home Office

Create an area for working and storing supplies in any nook with these helpful organizational items.



Get Creative with Cubbies

Increase your office area's storage space with a decorative wood cubby box and a DIY peg rack. Wood boxes with removable drawers are great for visible work areas, but you can double the storage space by removing the drawers and using the cubbies and drawers separately. Set the drawers on and around the original box, or hang them on the wall to free up space on your desktop. Create more wall-hung storage by crafting a simple peg rack. On a weathered piece of wood, add decorative knobs, hooks or nails, and use the piece to hang baskets, clipboards and other supplies.



Save space by using a desk with a hideaway work surface, such as a pull-out writing board or keyboard tray.





You could also use this desk as a vanity!

Build a Simple Murphy Desk

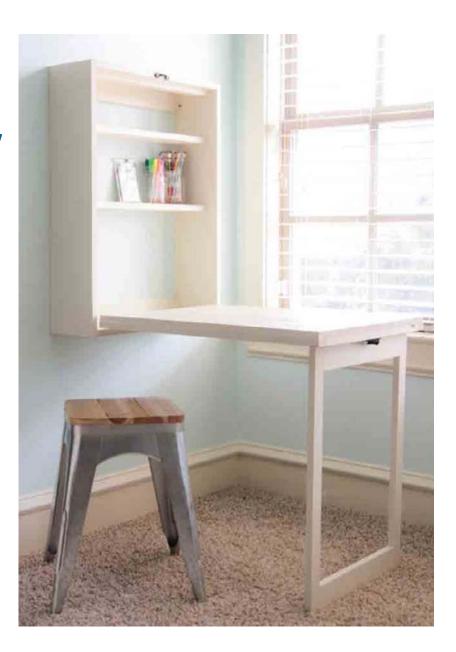
Create a hideaway office space with a Murphy desk! Ashley Turner and Whitney Gainer at Shanty 2 Chic made this desk that folds up to become a functional wall chalkboard. Start by building the box of the desk with wood glue and nails and then add the top and bottom brace pieces. These will be used to attach the desk to the wall. Cut wood planks for the desktop and attach with pocket-hole screws. Build the leg frames and then paint all your pieces white. Apply wood glue to a chalkboard panel and attach to the planked desktop. Install 1½" hinges on the bottom and 1" hinges on the top. To attach to the wall, drive 3" wood screws through the top and bottom desk braces and into the wall.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHLEY TURNER AND WHITNEY GAINER OF SHANTY-2-CHIC COM



DECORATE IT:

Easily add fabric embellishments by securing them inside the grater's holes.





Corral Clutter in Cheese Graters

Don't overlook any antique that resembles a container when you're organizing office supplies - even if it's a cheese grater! This clever idea from Katie Enzenberger at The Casual Craftlete was featured on the Live Laugh Rowe blog. Katie used vintage cheese graters from her local auction house as magnetic memo boards and storage containers for office and craft supplies. Use your own metal graters to hold pens and pencils, paintbrushes, sewing tools and more. And since the graters are made of metal, you can use magnets to display photos, quotes and notes.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY KATIE ENZENBERGER OF THECASUALCRAFTLETE.COM.



Install a Floating Desk

Add a work area that keeps you organized when you need it and becomes a wall shelf when you don't. The Lenora Wall Mount Desk from Harper Blvd has a split top that lifts independently, revealing a flat workspace and storage area and two corkboards. Install it at any height to use as a sitting or standing desk.

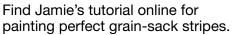
RESOURCE: LENORA WALL MOUNT DESK, HARPER BLVD, 800-633-5096, WWW.HARPERBLVD.COM.



Don't need a desk? This piece works great as a hideaway storage shelf.







Craft a Faux Grain-Sack Bulletin Board

Cover a bulletin board with grain-sack fabric to make it stylish enough to display in any room. Jamie Lundstrom at So Much Better with Age makes it easy by starting with a premade bulletin board. Cut a piece of canvas drop cloth that is slightly larger than your board. Stretch the fabric across the board and staple it in back. Lay out a template for the stripes with painter's tape and dry brush blue paint onto the exposed areas. Pull off the tape and follow your paint instructions to set the color. Attach twine in an X pattern over the bulletin board, stapling in back. Cover the staples with bias tape, add a picture hanger, and it's ready to use.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMIE LUNDSTROM OF SOMUCHBETTERWITHAGE.COM.





Build a **Custom Desk**

Build a custom floating desk that perfectly fits your space and your budget. Ashley Turner at Shanty 2 Chic built an extra-long desk with a lift-up top for her son's room for under \$30. Find step-by-step instructions for building your own online and then get to work. Stain your desk a dark walnut color and sand the edges for a rustic look. Install black hinges on the lift-up top and a black lock on the front. Pair the desk with a chair that can be folded up and put away (or used somewhere else!) at a moment's notice.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHLEY TURNER OF SHANTY-2-CHIC.COM.



Make this desk as long as your space allows to get even more storage.





RECYCLING TIP:

When repurposing old materials that are not straight or smooth, don't be afraid to flip boards over or switch them out to puzzle together your shelves.



Assemble Secret Shelves

It's always smart to think vertical in small areas. Stacy Risenmay at Not Just a Housewife took advantage of the wall space in her office with six floating shelves made out of old fence pickets. And they have a secret—they're also drawers! For your shelves, measure and cut your wood to length. Stacy used four boards for the top, four boards for the bottom and two boards for the sides for each of her shelves. Assemble the boards with glue and screws to make a long rectangular box with a top, bottom and sides. Cut 2" x 3" boards to length to attach your shelves to the wall. Drive screws through the boards and into your wall studs to secure. Then, slide your shelf onto the board and drive screws through the top of the shelf down into the board. To make each drawer, use thin plywood for the bottom, four 1" x 2" boards for the sides and another fence board for the front. Glue and nail together. There's no need to install additional hardware; just slide the drawer into your shelf.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY STACY RISENMAY OF NOTJUSTAHOUSEWIFE.NET.



PUNCH IT UP:

Experiment with different colors and patterns of fabric in your frame.



What a clever idea! Sara Kalucza at The Wishful Tinker used a thrift-store frame and leftover fabric to make these simple pockets for papers and pens. To craft a similar organizer, fold under and hem lengths of fabric and glue or sew them around the backside of the frame backing. Then, replace the backing in the frame and add your papers and supplies.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARA KALUCZA OF WISHFULTINKER.BLOGSPOT.COM.





Create a DIY Corner Office

Take advantage of an empty corner to create an office area with a desk and custom floating shelves. Ashley Turner and Whitney Gainer at Shanty 2 Chic built these shelves and then dressed them up with gold accents. Build your own using their step-by-step instructions and then stain with your desired color. Purchase metal corner hardware and spray paint gold. When dry, attach them to each corner with gold furniture tacks.

DESIGNED AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY ASHLEY TURNER AND WHITNEY GAINER OF SHANTY-2-CHIC.COM.



Remove your desk hardware and spray paint it to match!



Try a Folding Space-Saver Desktop

This wall-mounted folding desktop takes office minimalism to a whole new level. It's the perfect size for working on a laptop or when you need to do some quick writing. Not only is it great for a simple desktop in an apartment but it also works as an easy and compact work surface for a message center in a kitchen.

RESOURCE: ERGO DESK, WOODFOLD MANUFACTURING, 503-357-7181, WWW.ERGODESK.COM.



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